



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 11.1

Meeting Date: June 1, 2017

Subject: Ethnic Studies Update

- ☒ Information Item Only
- ☐ Approval on Consent Agenda
- ☐ Conference (for discussion only)
- ☐ Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- ☐ Conference/Action
- ☐ Action
- ☐ Public Hearing

Division: Academic Office/Youth Development Support Services

Recommendation: Board to hear the recommendation of the Academic Office to continue the implementation of the Ethnic Studies pilot for 2017-2018.

Background/Rationale: SCUSD implemented Year 1 of the Ethnic Studies pilot in 2016-2017 in alignment with the timeline of *Resolution 2845* which instated Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement by 2020. The pilot was launched at Luther Burbank, C.K. McClatchy, and George Washington Carver high school serving about 325 students in 10 sections. Pilot teachers received 60 hours of professional development in 2015-2016 in preparation for this course. The course was developed as a collaboration between the SCUSD Student Advisory Council, CSUS Ethnic Studies faculty, SCUSD teachers, local ethnic studies scholars, and SCUSD community members. The team created an ethnic studies textbook developed specifically for high schools in Sacramento. Data from the course highlighted that students experienced substantial growth in positive identity development, critical thinking, and social emotional learning. Year 2 of the pilot will be launched in 2017-2018 at American Legion, Health Professions, C.K. McClatchy, Hiram Johnson, Luther Burbank, Rosemont, George Washington Carver, Kennedy and New Tech high schools and will serve approximately 1500 students.

Financial Considerations: \$57,803.32

LCAP Goal(s): College, Career, and Life-Ready Graduates

Documents Attached:

1. Executive Summary

Estimated Time of Presentation: 10 minutes

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Approved by: José L Banda, Superintendent

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



I. Overview of the Title

In 2014-2015, the SCUSD Student Advisory Council (SAC) conducted a youth participatory action research project which analyzed over 1000 student surveys and developed three youth led initiatives. The initiatives covered three topics including dress code, college preparation, and ethnic studies. As a result, the SAC students, in partnership with several community organizations and California State University Sacramento (CSUS) faculty, developed *Resolution 2845*, “Ethnic Studies Resolution.” To establish an Ethnic Studies course in SCUSD to be piloted in the fall of 2015. On June 4, 2015, the SCUSD Board of Education unanimously voted to approve *Resolution 2845*.

The Ethnic Studies Pilot pushes forward SCUSD’s stance on providing students with a diverse, inclusive, and innovative social science curriculum. The pilot course emphasizes skillset development in Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) and CA Social Science standards and supports acquisition of the evolving framework of competencies outlined in the SCUSD graduate profile. The course also advances SCUSD’s position on creating a learning environment that welcomes different voices and perspectives into the classroom while providing narratives to better understand the experiences of all students and communities, especially those who have been historically marginalized. This course is especially important in today’s socio-political atmosphere where many students and families are feeling targeted and discriminated against because of their racial and ethnic identities. The course also aligns with and supports other district initiatives with this focus such as the new *Safe Haven* project which promotes the protection of some of the most vulnerable scholars and families in SCUSD.

II. Driving Governance

SCUSD’s decision to implement Ethnic Studies is grounded in a growing body of research that shows the benefits of such a course on student performance in multiple areas. Research conducted by Dee and Penner (2016) found that Ethnic Studies courses raised attendance by 21%, boosted GPA by 1.4 points, and raised credits earned by 23. These results are consistent with relevant research by Sleeter (2011; 2013) which argues that classes taught with culturally relevant curricula have shown to improve attendance and reduce overall drop-out rates. Importantly, in regards to SEL, other researchers have argued that educators who teach with a culturally responsive pedagogy and curricula have shown to improve the positive self-concepts of historically marginalized students (Gay, 2013).

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



In recent years, the state of California has adopted legislation that calls greater attention to the importance of Ethnic Studies. The FAIR Education Act (also known as Senate Bill 48) was signed into law in 2011. It requires that California public schools provide Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful representations of our diverse ethnic and cultural population in the grade K-12 history and social science curriculum. According to the FAIR Education Act, instruction in history/social science shall include the following ethnic and cultural populations in the teaching of California and United States history, specifically, the contributions of both women and men; Native Americans; African Americans; Mexican Americans; Asian Americans; Pacific Islanders; European Americans; Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans; persons with disabilities; and members of other ethnic and cultural groups, to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America, with particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society.

In addition, AB 2016, a bill created by Assembly Member Luis Alejo was approved by Governor Brown which stated "Existing law requires the State Board of Education, with the assistance of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to establish a list of textbooks and other instructional materials that highlight the contributions of minorities in the development of California and the United States. Existing law establishes the Instructional Quality Commission and requires the commission to, among other things, recommend curriculum frameworks to the state board. AB2016 would require the Instructional Quality Commission to develop, and the state board to adopt, modify, or revise, a model curriculum in ethnic studies, and would encourage each school district and charter school that maintains any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, that does not otherwise offer a standards-based ethnic studies curriculum to offer a course of study in ethnic studies based on the model curriculum."

Finally, HR 26 (2017) which is currently moving through CA state hearings will determine whether Ethnic Studies will be added into the graduation requirements for *all* high schools within CA. The resolution is being supported by many schools and organizations throughout the state and will be voted on in the coming months.

III. Budget

The budget and associated costs for Ethnic Studies was \$57,803.32 for the 2016/2017 school year. This included the cost of instructional materials and professional learning for teachers.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures

In supporting the Ethnic Studies Pilot initiative, the goal of SCUSD is to create a more inclusive learning environment that is representative of the diversity of all of our students. It is our hope that with this new knowledge, our 9th grade students may move throughout their education with a more critical, knowledgeable, and empathetic lens. This course will help to develop students' skillsets in Common Core English Language Arts and History Standards while growing their capacity for Social-Emotional Learning. We believe that building these core foundational skills early in high school will strengthen our students as they move into college and career in the future. Our expectations are supported by current research about the effectiveness of Ethnic Studies courses.

The objectives of this course are to help students to: 1) develop positive self-images by exploring their stories, cultures and identities in a formal academic setting, 2) analyze in detail a series of events described in a text to bridge differences, and gain a greater cultural, historic and critical understanding of, and empathy for, a variety of cultures and experiences in the United States, 3) develop an understanding of key ethnic studies concepts, 4) determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text, 5) evaluate how men and women of color organized and enacted social change through political organization, mobilization, lawsuits and legislation, 6) determine why social justice movements formed and what contributions they made to America analyzing and citing primary sources, and finally 7) evaluate how intersectionality affects the social, economic and political power of individuals within their own ethnic group and in relation to other ethnic groups.

A multi-stage evaluation process for ethnic studies has been created to gauge both the perceptions of students and teachers before and after the implementation of the course. The evaluation process consists of both qualitative data and descriptive quantitative data. Multiple focus groups have been conducted with both teachers and students to better understand their experiences throughout the rollout of this course to improve future implementation at other schools. Since leading research suggests that ethnic studies courses may have positive impacts on items like attendance, GPA, and credits earned overtime, SCUSD plans to evaluate these specific components in the future.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



V. Major Initiatives

Course of Study Development

SCUSD Social Science pilot teachers worked in collaboration with CSUS College of Ethnic Studies and College of Education faculty, Sacramento Ethnic Studies Now Coalition staff, and various educators from neighboring districts including San Juan Unified School District and Elk Grove Unified School district to produce the ethnic studies pilot curriculum. The curriculum was created as a semester long course in replacement of Contemporary Global Issues, which serves as a first or second semester attachment to 9th grade Geography.

Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary course that uses a comparative and historical perspective to examine the languages, values, and voices of diverse groups within the United States. Using the skills and knowledge outlined in the Common Core Standards for ELA and CA History/Social Science standards, students investigate the practice of naming and being named, the intersection between ethnicity, culture, nationality, race, and gender, and the historic, economic and personal consequences of oppression and resistance. Students also learn how the social construction of identity is created, contested, and altered by historic and economic processes. Emphasis is placed on African-Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Chicanos/Latinos, Native Americans and other ethnic groups in Sacramento and Northern California.

Selection and Development of Instructional Resources

The SAC in partnership with CSUS College of Ethnic Studies and College of Education put out a call for authorship to develop a custom textbook for this course. The editors of the text intentionally included the voices and narratives of SCUSD students and scholars in the field of ethnic studies. The instructional textbook used in the course was developed for a 9th grade level. The pilot text was tailored to represent the various student ethnic groups that comprise the district and its local communities. As the pilot progresses, the editors of the textbook will invite other students, teachers, and community to offer additional edits and contributions to improve the content of the materials. New editions of the text will be produced in conjunction with the growth and progression of the pilot.

Professional Learning for Teachers (and School Leaders)

All professional learning opportunities were contracted with the CSUS College of Ethnic Studies and College of Education. Specific faculty from each of these departments facilitated a total of 60 hours of professional development for each pilot teacher. 20 hours of professional development were offered in the spring and 40 hours were offered in the summer. The goal of these professional learning opportunities was to build the knowledge of pilot teachers, support

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



their work towards an ethnic studies pedagogy, and to align curriculum approaches from site to site. Pilot teachers from the 2016-2017 pilot will return in leadership roles to help train other teachers in upcoming implementation phases.

VI. Results

This information below highlights findings from two evaluation processes completed during the Ethnic Studies pilot year. The first section examines quantitative and qualitative pre-assessment data extrapolated from surveys and short interviews and the second section looks at qualitative post-assessment data taken from multiple focus groups.

Section 1 (Pre-Assessment Data)

SCUSD is currently in the preliminary stages of analyzing pre-assessment data gathered from some of our pilot students from the 2016-2017 year. This pre-assessment was used to explore the student's perceptions about race in specific regards to their own identity, family, neighborhood, community, and school experience. The pre-assessment consisted of 67 questions. The following descriptive data provided below gives an important snapshot of some of the key highlights from the student's pre-assessment. The pre assessment includes 209 respondents.

The following data reinforces the need for the Ethnic Studies pilot within our district: More than 33% of students reported that they sometimes get teased or bullied because of their race/ethnicity. About 68% of students feel that they experience more obstacles in their life because of their race/ethnicity. More than 50% of students feel that their personal safety is affected by their race/ethnicity. More than 48% of students reported that their family has never told them stories about being treated well because of their race/ethnicity. Close to 68% of students feel that there are problems between students because of their race/ethnicity at their schools.

When students were asked to describe a time when you felt that race/ethnicity influenced others' actions towards you either positively or negatively they provided examples like the ones below:

- "I've had people look at me like I did something wrong just because of the color of my skin."
- "I had a negative moment when Donald Trump called Mexicans, immigrants, rapists, drug dealers, and he said he will build a wall on Mexico, so I knew Trump hates US/Mexicans."

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



- "In high school, a boy called me a "beaner, illegal immigrant, wetback" because my family is Mexican.
- "Lots of people don't believe that I'm mixed with Asian because of my mom being darker than other Asians, so times I have to prove to them that I really am, but the outcome comes to racial jokes and slurs coming from students in my class."
- "I feel like just because I'm Mexican, people think that me and my family are less than everyone else and people make assumptions that we weren't here or that my parents don't have papers or don't speak English..."

The major findings from this data concluded that many students have experienced race related interpersonal discrimination from peers at school and within their own community. The students included within this preliminary sample highlight the major issues related to race, ethnicity, and identity which still confound our society today. It is our hope that this course can create an environment where students have the ability to process and analyze the many institutions within our society that promote systemic racism and discrimination.

Section 2 (Post-Assessment Data)

In addition to pre-assessment surveys, SCUSD also conducted multiple focus groups with students. The data below is arranged by questions that were asked during focus group sessions. When asked, *What did you learn from this class*, student responses highlighted three major areas of focus: missing history, the impact of stereotypes, and taking lessons from the past. Representative examples of these areas are outlined below:

- "I learned that there is a lot of history that is they don't tell us about...there are lot of stories about Black, Asian, Mexican, and Native people that I never knew about...like people of color go through a lot and have done a lot for this country but they don't get mentioned..."
- "All the stereotypes that are used to make us look bad...make us look like criminals...or like ugly people...they are wrong...because of this class I know that people shouldn't be treated certain ways because of the way they look...this class helped me to see that the negative images of minority groups are wrong...we are so much more than what they show us to be..."
- "I learned that even though we are divided...there's been lots of ways that we work together in the past...those lessons are what give me hope that we can get past our differences you know?...I know now that we are more alike than we are different...we may look different on the outside but we share a lot of the same problems...and a lot of the same culture too."

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



Students were also asked, *How did this class impact you?* An analysis of the data from this questions suggested that students were impacted in the following ways: empathy for others, understanding their social responsibility, and building a critical perspective on history.

Representative examples of this are highlighted below:

- "I didn't know a lot about my classmates...it made me feel good to know that I wasn't the only one who experienced all the racist stuff...sometimes you feel lonely you know? But like just hearing them share their stories and stuff...it made me feel like...they understood me too."
- "I feel like I kinda talk a little different...or maybe just think before I talk about people more...I know that a lot of what we say about people is really kinda made up by racism...like I feel kinda guilty if I keep saying certain words if I know that they might hurt someone."
- "It makes me think like...what is like the other side of the story?...like where are the other people who are left out?...where is their story? Not just like in history...but with all my classes...like where are the Mexican authors or Asian authors in English? Or like who are the Black scientists?...just kinda makes me think like there are other people that we leave out a lot so I kinda wanna ask my teachers like can we hear more about these other groups too?"

The final questions students were asked to engage with was, *What will you take into the future from this class?* Analysis of data taken from this question surfaced that students felt that they are taking a new respect for others and a social responsibility towards race relations. Examples of this are highlighted below:

- "I'll always remember that I shouldn't treat people based on stereotypes...you have to get to know people before you judge them or people that look like them."
- "I know now that my history isn't just slavery...we have done more...accomplished more in this country...even though they don't tell us about it...I'm proud to be Black because our history is important...I know I matter..."
- "The idea that it is *my* responsibility...or like my generation's responsibility to make sure that we fix the problems of the past...since we know that racism and discrimination happened...and like still happens...we shouldn't let it happen again to other people...I wanna make sure I do my part..."

The voices of youth participating in the Ethnic Studies pilot course reflected in these data reveal the impact that the course is already having and its potential to have a more profound impact on students' perspectives, self-perception, agency and identity.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps

SCUSD will continue the implementation of the Ethnic Studies Pilot initiative into the 2017-2018 school year. American Legion, Health Professions, C.K. McClatchy, Luther Burbank, Rosemont, Hiram Johnson, GW Carver, Kennedy and New Tech will be included in the 2nd phase of the pilot.

In this 2nd phase of implementation, SCUSD will continue to build and add more sections at each school site. There will be approximately 45 sections of Ethnic Studies offered in the 2017-2018 school year. The program will serve approximately 1485 students. 24 teachers will receive 60 hours of professional development in preparation for the school year.

SCUSD will continue its partnership with the students, teachers, parents, community, and CSUS to ensure that the multiple voices and perspectives are included in the continued development of this course.

Lastly, SCUSD will continue to develop its evaluation of this course to measure how enrollment in this class affects items like attendance, GPA, credits earned overtime, and positive identity development. The evaluation of this data will serve in adding to the growing amount of research that highlights the effectiveness of ethnic studies courses on student engagement, achievement, and personal development.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



References

Dee, T., & Penner, E. (2016). The causal effects of cultural relevance: Evidence from an ethnic studies curriculum. *Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis*. 16(1), 1-47. . Retrieved from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp16-01>

Gay, G. (2013). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (multicultural education series) 2nd Edition*. New York: Teachers College.

Sleeter, C. E. (2011) The academic and social value of ethnic studies. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Sleeter, C. E. (2013) Teaching for social justice in multicultural classrooms. *Multicultural Education Review* 5(2), 1-19.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



Appendix A:

Resolution 2845

- WHEREAS, Sacramento, CA is the 2nd most ethnically diverse city in the United States; and
- WHEREAS, Sacramento City Unified School District is the 4th most diverse school district in the United States; and
- WHEREAS, our students are 37% Hispanic or Latino, 17.4% Asian, 18% African American, 19% White, and 5.3% of students are two or more ethnicities and over 44 languages are spoken in our district; and
- WHEREAS, a high school curriculum that reflects the diversity of ALL students will best serve our students; and
- WHEREAS, only 1 of 13 high schools within our district offers ethnic studies; and
- WHEREAS, the CA statewide initiative AB101, an initiative that mandates that an A-G ethnic studies be made available at all high schools is in the appropriation stages in the California Department of Education; and
- WHEREAS, the California Teachers' Association (CTA) has publically declared their support for the AB101 ethnic studies initiative; and
- WHEREAS, El Rancho Unified School District, Los Angeles Unified School District, Montebello Unified School District, Santa Monica Unified School District, San Francisco Unified School District, Woodland Unified School District have written and approved, resolutions and board policies to adopt Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement within their high schools; and
- WHEREAS, the goals of SEL (self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, decision-making, and pro-social behaviors) could be supported through the implementation of an ethnic studies course; and
- WHEREAS research data shows that high school ethnic studies classes have reduced drop-out rates of students of color, raised graduation rates, reduced unexcused absences, boosted self-esteem, raised self-efficacy, increased academic engagement, and raised personal empowerment; and
- WHEREAS, close to 2500 signatures have been collected in support of this ethnic studies initiative from students, parents, teachers, and community members; and
- WHEREAS, our objective is to have all students learn to respect, accept, and love themselves and others.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education construct, implement, and sustain an ethnic studies course as a high school graduation requirement.
- RESOLVED FURTHER, that an ethnic studies course modeled after an A-G approved course be developed and proposed by November 2015 and accepted by April 2016.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office: Ethnic Studies Update

June 1, 2017



- RESOLVED FURTHER, the first phase of ethnic studies courses will happen in three high schools, with phase two following at five additional high schools, and phase three following at the remaining high schools.
- RESOLVED FURTHER, prospective teachers for “Phase 1” will have comprehensive training, professional development, and certification options provided to them by the Sacramento State Ethnic Studies Teacher Training Credentialing Consortium by Spring 2016.
- RESOLVED FURTHER, that a funding plan be developed through the LCAP to ensure that the course and tools for its evaluation will be funded comprehensively in a manner and level commensurate with this recognized community need as a local priority.
- RESOLVED FURTHER, the ethnic studies curricula and teaching methods be evaluated on a semester to semester basis to make necessary improvements to ensure that its content be relevant, meaningful, and effective to properly address and support the recognized community need.
- RESOLVED FURTHER, a committee comprised of current social science teachers, current professors from CSU and UC ethnic studies departments, leaders of ethnic community organizations, A-G curricula specialists, and YOUTH, be established and utilized throughout the process of creating and evaluating this ethnic studies course.
- RESOLVED FINALLY, that the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education construct, implement, and sustain an ethnic studies course as a high school graduation requirement by 2020.