



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Report

Report Number:

Date:

Subject: Ethnic Studies Committee Report and Recommendations

Responsible Staff:

Name: Gerardo Loera

Office/Division: Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Support

Telephone No.: 213-241-5333

BOARD REPORT

Action Proposed:

The purpose of this Board Report is to provide recommendations to the LAUSD School Board on the implementation of the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement, established as a result of Board Resolution (023-14/15) adopted on 11/18/14. The Ethnic Studies Committee recommends that schools be allotted maximum flexibility in the implementation of the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement by offering either a newly developed Ethnic Studies course or an approved course within the field of Ethnic Studies. The Board Resolution called for the graduation requirement to be piloted, the Committee has determined that this is not a viable option, as it will create varied graduation requirements at Senior High Schools throughout the District. The Committee has further determined the Board Resolution be fully implemented with the class of 2022 (incoming 9th graders in 2018). In order to allow a thorough examination, evaluation, and where necessary rewriting of existing A-G approved courses and to allow time for the development and University of California Office of the President (UCOP) approval of a new Ethnic Studies Course, the Ethnic Studies Committee recommends the attached timeline for implementation.

Background:

The Ethnic Studies Committee was assembled through the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction in response to Board Resolution 023-14/15. Five meetings over 6 weeks were scheduled, with one meeting occurring each week, excluding Spring Break.

Representatives on the Committee include students, District personnel (Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support, Student Integration Services, Human Relations/Equity and Diversity), Educational Service Center representatives, principals, UTLA and AALA representatives, university professors, community members (including



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Ethnic Studies Now), school principals, ethnic studies scholars and teachers with experience teaching Ethnic Studies courses. With the exception of students (who attended two meetings), all of these representative categories were in attendance at all meetings, with most of the Committee members attending every meeting.

Meeting Date	March 16, 2015	March 25, 2015	April 8, 2015	April 16, 2015	April 23, 2015
Number Attending	30	39	22	31	27

Meetings were co-facilitated by Dr. Robert Cooper, Associate Professor with UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Gerardo Loera, Chief Academic Officer with the Los Angeles Unified School District, and Dr. Angel J. Barrett, Executive Director of Instruction, LAUSD Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support.

Meeting Descriptions

Meeting 1: March 16, 2015

Meeting Purpose: To clarify the overall purpose of the Committee to advise, assist, and make recommendations to the Superintendent and the Board about programs, professional development, curriculum, and issues related to ethnic studies. A second purpose was to inform Committee members of the LAUSD context into which an Ethnic Studies course must exist.

The Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support (OCISS) provided Committee members with a comprehensive look at current and future graduation requirements, including alignment of the graduation requirements of LAUSD, UC/CSU and California Education Code. This included a description of the A-G requirements as well as the impact of graduation requirements on English Learners, low performing students, and high performing students. The committee discussed the level of urgency in ensuring that students are supported in meeting all of the A-G requirements.

The District Performance Management Unit provided current progress results and progress projections of graduation attainment for current LAUSD students.

The Committee members engaged in a discussion around their initial



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understandings and beliefs of how an Ethnic Studies course should be structured.

Meeting 2: March 26, 2015

Meeting Purpose: To understand the historical context of Ethnic Studies courses and to examine various Ethnic Studies course models that might be adopted.

Committee members used selected readings from the book *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches* by Philip Q. Yang to build common understanding among Committee members of how the field of Ethnic Studies and ethnic studies courses have been conceived and implemented historically in U.S. education.

Committee members then discussed how the historical implementation of Ethnic Studies might apply to the Los Angeles Unified context. The discussion included, but was not limited to examination of diversity, race, identity, inclusion of ethnic groups, empowerment and disenfranchisement, course purpose, and who should teach an Ethnic Studies course.

The committee was presented with four models that have been utilized to offer Ethnic Studies courses. The committee divided into four working groups. Each group was assigned the task to examine a model in depth and to prepare a presentation for the next meeting that explained the model in the LAUSD context. The models discussed were:

MODEL A: Creating one ethnic studies class to meet the requirement as the only way to meet the requirement.

MODEL B: Utilize only already approved A-G classes for classes to meet the requirement.

MODEL C: Students can meet the credit through an ethnic studies class or through currently approved A-G classes in the field of ethnic studies (a combination of Model A and Model B). This option includes reviewing existing LAUSD coursework to ensure it meets the goals or objectives of an Ethnic Studies field before formally approving to meet the requirement. The model further allows for the development of additional courses.

MODEL D: Alternative Models (blended learning, independent study, integrated into career pathways)



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Meeting 3: April 8, 2015

Meeting Purpose: To develop recommendations regarding a course model to fulfill the Ethnic Studies requirement. The Ethnic Studies course must fit within existing District course requirements and structure. Committee groups presented and discussed the Ethnic Studies models that were introduced at the March 26 meeting. Presentations/discussions examined model purpose, objectives, intended and unintended consequences, necessary resources, specific pros and cons.

Presentations made clear that each model has strengths and weaknesses. Committee members repeatedly expressed the view that any single model or a combination of the models could work, provided that the purpose and objectives, and expected outcomes of the course had clear definition and criteria established.

Meeting 4: April 16, 2015

Meeting Purpose: To explore how Ethnic Studies should be defined. Discuss, develop and draft guiding principles (objectives) for the courses.

The committee reviewed and discussed proposed drafts of Ethnic Studies definitions. The Committee discussed pros and cons of each definition and clarified the need for the definition to be focused on the needs of the LAUSD student population.

In order to understand how an Ethnic Studies course might be organized, the committee examined an example course outline that a teacher in Fremont Unified School District developed and that was approved by UCOP.

Committee members broke into smaller working groups to draft proposed guiding principles (objectives) for an Ethnic Studies course(s) that will fulfill LAUSD's graduation requirements.

Meeting 5: April 23, 2015

Meeting Goals: 1) Review and provide feedback to guiding principles (objectives) for an Ethnic Studies course; 2) Review timeline, practical considerations and budgets involved in creating, piloting, and fully implementing Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement.

Committee members reviewed draft-guiding principles (objectives) and provided feedback language. For example, whether course focus should



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start with the ethnic experience of the local Los Angeles community, or whether it should have a broader American emphasis.

Committee members examined following scenarios:

- Existing course meeting definition and objectives
- Existing course not definition and objectives
- Creating an new Ethnic Studies course
- Creating a new course in the field of ethnic studies

For each scenario, considerations include writing or rewriting the course (or courses), the UCOP/A-G approval process and timeframe, teacher credentialing requirements and processes, and textbook adoption protocols and timelines.

Finally, the committee reviewed how the scenario considerations will impact bringing the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement to full implementation. This included course creation, teaching staff acquisition and reassignment and professional development, timelines for UCOP approval, textbook adoption timelines, and the wide variety of school contexts in which the course must be implemented.

Expected Outcomes: All schools within LAUSD will offer either the Ethnic Studies course or a course within the field of Ethnic Studies by 2017 – 2018 and beginning in 2018 – 2019, every incoming 9th grader will be required satisfy the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement.

In the school year 2015 – 2016:

- Instructional staff will facilitate the writing of the Ethnic Studies course
- Newly written course will be submitted for approval to UCOP in February 2016
 - UCOP timeline:
<http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/updating-your-course-list/submitting-courses/index.html>
- Instructional staff will work with 2 teachers per Local District to revise existing courses eligible to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirements
 - Courses need to be updated to ensure they meet the Board adopted definition and objective that meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement
 - Courses must also meet the demands of Common Core
 - Revised existing courses will be submitted to UCOP for



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approval in February 2016

- The District will conduct a textbook adoption process for all courses deemed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement
- The District will plan and deliver professional development will be to those schools piloting the Ethnic Studies course in 2016 – 2017

In the school year 2016 – 2017:

- Instructional staff will work with 2 teachers per Local District and facilitate the writing of new courses designed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement
 - Courses must also meet the demands of Common Core
 - Revised existing courses will be submitted to UCOP for approval in February 2017
- The District will conduct a textbook adoption process for all new courses deemed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement
- 30 schools will pilot the Ethnic Studies course by offering it to all incoming 9th grade students
 - Schools will need to modify master schedules to dedicate at least one full time employee to the Ethnic Studies pilot
- The District will offer professional development for all courses deemed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement

In the school year 2017 – 2018:

- The District will finalize A-G approved Ethnic Studies courses, instructional materials, and professional development for use in the 2018 – 2019 school year
- All schools will be required to offer at least one course that will meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement
- The District will offer professional development

In the school year 2018 – 2019:

- Every incoming 9th grader will be required to satisfy the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement in order to graduate

The plan for implementation of the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement will allow the District to thoroughly examine, evaluate, and where necessary revise existing A-G approved courses and allow time for the development and UCOP approval of a new Ethnic Studies Course. Additionally, this timeline provides the District the necessary time for budget development, to review and adopt textbooks, and provide professional development for both new and existing courses.



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Board Options and Consequences:

Yes – The proposed timeline ensures that budget, curricular, instructional, and professional development materials are written and reviewed with the input of all stakeholders. Further, it provides the District the needed time to submit courses to UCOP for approval, and ensure all students take the necessary coursework to meet A–G requirements. Schools will have adequate time to establish a clear model for the curricular and master schedule transition while addressing any potential staffing needs.

No – Without adequate time for budget development, courses to be reviewed, new courses to be written, textbooks to be adopted, and professional development to be developed and delivered, schools will not be equipped to provide the opportunity for students to enroll in courses needed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement for the class of 2019.

Policy Implications:

LAUSD graduation requirements must be updated to include the category of Ethnic Studies.

LAUSD policy on the submission of new/experimental courses will need to be updated to include the newly adopted definition and objective for evaluating which courses meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement.

LAUSD will need to enter into textbook adoption for courses deemed to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement.

Budget Impact:

See Attached

Issues and Analysis:

In order to determine which courses meet this requirement, instructional staff will need to review courses based on the definition:

Ethnic Studies courses operate from the consideration that race and racism, have been, and continue to be, profoundly powerful social and cultural forces in American society. These courses focus on the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, Native Americans, and other racialized peoples in the US. Courses are grounded in the concrete situations of people of color, and use a methodological framing that emphasizes both the structural dimensions of race and racism and the associated cultural dimensions. (Adapted from UC Berkeley, Department of Ethnic Studies).



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All courses must also include the following as a course objective:

With an emphasis on social justice and responsibility, the course promotes critical thinking about the complex intersections of race with gender, class, sexuality, and other systems of difference that shape individual and group interactions, American identity, and culture.

Currently, existing A-G approved courses that may meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement do not have adopted textbooks. The District must adopt instructional materials to support these courses. Additionally, once the new Ethnic Studies course is written, the District will need to adopt textbooks. Given the sensitive nature of the topics to be covered in those courses determined to meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement, it is essential that teachers be trained on both the expectations of these courses and the use of their corresponding instructional materials. Initially, courses that meet the graduation requirement will be available in both English Language Arts and History/Social Science, necessitating professional development geared to specific subjects and teachers credentialed within those subjects.

Schools will need to make adjustments in their master schedule by either buying an additional full time employee with the appropriate credential or adjusting instructional priorities to ensure there is adequate staffing, with appropriate credentials, for students to have access to courses that meet the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement.

The Ethnic Studies Committee recognizes the importance of piloting new courses. Current Resolution language calls for a pilot of the Ethnic Studies Course while simultaneously making Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement. The Committee has determined that this is not a viable option, as it will create varied graduation requirements at Senior High Schools throughout the District. In order to fully implement the new graduation requirements to include Ethnic Studies the Committee recommends piloting the new course prior to the implementation of the graduation requirement.

Attachments:

Ethnic Studies Rollout Timeline
List of Courses that Meet Ethnic Studies Requirement
Ethnic Studies Implementation Budget
Ethnic Studies Committee Meeting Notes
Supporting Materials Used at Ethnic Studies Committee Meetings



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Informative

**Desegregation
Impact Statement**

Respectfully submitted,

Ramon Cortines
Superintendent

APPROVED BY:

MICHELLE KING
Senior Deputy Superintendent
School Operations

REVIEWED BY:

DAVID HOLMQUIST
General Counsel

APPROVED &
PRESENTED BY:

Insert Name
Insert Title
Insert Division/Office

Approved as to form.

TONY ATIENZA
Director of Budget Services and
Financial Planning (Interim)

Approved as to budget impact statement.