

August 11, 2020

Chair Jose Iniguez and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission

RE: Agenda Item #2: Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Chair Jose Iniguez and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

We are writing as members of a statewide working group to Promote Authentic College, Career, and Civic Readiness Assessment Systems (PACCCRAS), to offer suggestions for consideration for the development of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum. PACCCRAS is a diverse group of thought leaders representing higher education, K-12 classroom teachers, administrators, researchers, policy advocates, and community and nonprofit leaders.

Ethnic Studies are imperative to the foundation of a state that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of its population. We commend the Instructional Quality Commission for its thoughtfulness in developing the Ethnic Studies curriculum so that all California students can learn about the histories, perspectives, and contributions of four major ethnic groups and the social and political obstacles they have overcome and still face. This is essential learning for all students today and for their futures in our increasingly diverse state.

We are at a pivotal moment in our nation's history, facing twin crises in race relations and the COVID-19 pandemic that expose the vestiges of past and present differences in societal conditions based on race and ethnicity. Ethnic Studies would be incomplete without civic learning for students to know how to leverage opportunities and outlets within a democracy to effect positive social and policy changes. Any model curriculum created must begin with discussing the necessary conditions for it to be successful. We believe an Ethnic Studies curriculum should be required for all students across the pK-12 spectrum to obtain age-appropriate understandings about race and ethnicity. And, an explicit civic learning and engagement component should be required within Ethnic Studies to bolster student agency and provide on-going opportunities for students to practice their knowledge and skills in engaging with our democratic system. Such knowledge acquisition and practice of good citizenship should be available throughout pK-12 and not limited to taking Ethnic Studies as an elective in high school.

Ethnic Studies is not limited to focusing on the "studying" of marginalized subgroups to draw attention to past and present inequalities. A civic/community engagement/action project should be the culminating requirement for students to apply their knowledge and voice to affect social transformation. Equal attention needs to be paid to preparing students to act on their rights and responsibilities as civic participants and to advocate and mobilize for positive social and policy changes. We support professional development for enabling teachers to learn about civic processes and policies and to facilitate student inquiry, investigation of current and controversial issues, engagement in civil dialogues and civic action. We need to support students to gain knowledge of themselves and their communities, but also practice **doing something** to positively change their community and the world, to foster and usher in a more truthful, equitable, and just society. (see [PACCCRAS's Civic Engagement Competency Framework](#) for sample aligned competencies)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. We believe a student affirming Ethnic Studies curriculum with civic learning is foundational to engendering student empowerment, compassion, and solidarity to value diversity and promote positive social changes. However, a high-quality curriculum will have little impact if it remains on the margins of the education agenda, as optional. We offer our resources, perspectives and expertise to continue this conversation with the state about our proposed recommendations.

Sincerely,  
PACCCRAS Working Group

## ***Signing Members:***

Thomas Adams  
Trustee  
Davis Joint Unified School District

Michelle Alas  
Policy Director  
GENup\*  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Dr. Blanca Baltazar  
Assistant Superintendent  
Salinas Union High School District  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Kristen M. Boroski  
Career Technical Education  
Director  
Fresno Unified School District

Brian Brady  
President  
Mikva Challenge  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Debra Duardo, M.S.W., Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Los Angeles County Office of  
Education  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Angela Fan  
Director of Community  
Engagement and California  
Chapter Director  
LexGen\*  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Mark Gomez  
Social Studies Curriculum  
Specialist,  
Salinas Union High School District  
Adjunct Faculty, CSU Monterey Bay

Michelle M. Herczog, Ed.D.  
Immediate Past President  
California Council for the Social  
Studies

Devin Hess  
Academic & Civic Engagement  
Coordinator  
UC Berkeley History-Social Science  
Project

Bill Honig  
Former IQC member  
Former State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

Elaine K. Ikeda, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
California Campus Compact

Nancy Le  
CTE-Linked Learning Specialist  
Los Angeles Unified School District

Hueling M. Lee, Ed.L.D.  
Executive Director  
AdaptEd Partners & PACCCRAS

Robyn Litt, NBCT  
Teacher on Special Assignment  
Encinitas Union School District

Bina Lefkovitz  
Trustee  
Sacramento County Office of  
Education

Daisy Martin, PhD  
Founding Director  
The History & Civics Project at UC  
Santa Cruz

Michael Matsuda  
Superintendent  
Anaheim Union High School  
District

Deborah McKoy, PhD  
Executive Director  
Center for Clties + Schools  
UC Berkeley

Alicia Montgomery, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
Center for Powerful Public Schools  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Fresno Unified School District  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Jennifer O'Day  
Chair, California Collaborative on  
District Reform  
Institute Fellow, American  
Institutes for Research

Michael Roe, Ed.D.  
Executive Director,  
Leadership, Innovation and  
Outreach  
Riverside County Office of  
Education  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Karn Saetang  
Policy and Alliance Director  
Californians for Justice  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Olivia Santillan  
History & Civic Engagement  
Coordinator  
Santa Clara County Office of  
Education

Elisha Smith Arrillaga  
Executive Director  
The Education Trust – West  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Anne Stanton  
President  
Linked Learning Alliance  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Roman Stearns  
Founder & Executive Director  
Scaling Student Success  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

June E. Thompson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
National Leadership Institute

John Trasviña  
California Executive Director  
Generation Citizen  
*(signing on behalf of organization)*

Jocelyn Yow  
Policy Manager  
IGNITE National

\*Student led non-profits