

ETHNIC

STUDIES

MODEL CURRICULUM

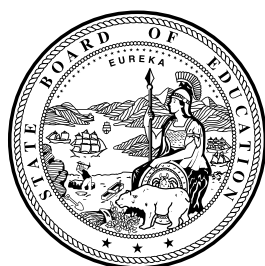


Adopted by the California  
State Board of Education  
March 2021

Published by the California  
Department of Education  
Sacramento, 2022



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# **PUBLISHING INFORMATION**

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## **Notice**

The guidance in the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* is not binding on local educational agencies or other entities. Except for the statutes, regulations, and court decisions that are referenced herein, the document is exemplary, and compliance with it is not mandatory. (See *Education Code* Section 33308.5.)



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# ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL CURRICULUM PREFACE

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# THE MODEL CURRICULUM

## Legislation

Assembly Bill 2016 by Assemblymember Luis Alejo, Chapter 327 of the Statutes of 2016, added Section 51226.7 to the *Education Code*, which directs the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to develop, and the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt, a model curriculum in ethnic studies.

Consistent with the legislation this document will (1) offer support for the inclusion of ethnic studies as either a stand-alone elective or to be integrated into existing history–social science and English language arts courses; (2) be written in language that is inclusive and supportive of multiple users, including teachers (single and multiple subject), support staff, administrators, and the community, and encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality and equity, justice, race<sup>1</sup>

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- 1 Race: There are multiple definitions of race. One is that race is the idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences. Genetic studies in the late twentieth century refuted the existence of biogenetically distinct races, and scholars now argue that “races” are cultural interventions (inventions) reflecting specific attitudes and beliefs that were imposed on different populations in the wake of western European conquests beginning in the fifteenth century (Audrey Smedley, Yasuko I. Takezawa, and Peter Wade. “Race.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 23, 2020. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link1> [accessed September 1, 2020]). Within the field of ethnic studies, “race” is defined as

a (neo)colonial social construction. It is viewed as a “master category” based upon a Eurocentric biological fallacy that is central to inequitable power relations in society. As a social and historical construct, the idea of race is primarily filtered through physical traits (phenotype), including pigmentation (skin color) and other physical features; where people’s ancestral origins are from (precolonial geographic ancestry); cultural traits; and sometimes economic class. Since race produces material impacts, it also produces racial consciousness and facilitates the process of racialization and racial projects, including both the oppositional projects of racism/colorism/anti-Blackness/anti-Indigeneity and anti-racism/racial justice. The People of Color Power movements that emerged in the 1960s (“Black Power, Red Power, Brown Power, Yellow Power”) are key examples of how race has also been embraced and leveraged in the resistance against racism; they are the movements that Ethnic Studies rose from. In the United States today, races very broadly break down as people of color (POC) and white people. (R. Tolteka Cuauhtin, Miguel Zavala, Christine Sleeter, and Wayne Au, eds. 2019. *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*. Milwaukee, OR: Rethinking Schools.)



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and racism,<sup>2</sup> ethnicity<sup>3</sup> and bigotry, Indigeneity, and others; (3) be written as a guide to allow school districts to adapt their courses to reflect the pupil demographics in their communities; (4) include course outlines that offer a thematic approach to ethnic studies with concepts that provide space for educators to build in examples and case studies from diverse backgrounds; (5) include course outlines that have been approved by the University of California and the California State University as having met the A–G requirements for college readiness, in addition to sample lesson plans, curricula, primary source documents, pedagogical and professional development resources and tools, and current research on the field, among other materials; and (6) be developed with the guidance of classroom teachers, college/university ethnic studies faculty and experts, and representatives from local educational agencies, and with representation from native peoples of the land where any course is taught, and the racial/ethnic populations referenced directly, where possible.

## Focus on Four Foundational Disciplines

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum will focus on the traditional ethnic studies first established in California higher education, which has been characterized by four foundational disciplines: African American, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x, Native American, and Asian American and Pacific Islander studies.<sup>4</sup> The focus on the experiences of these four disciplines provides an opportunity for students to learn of the histories, cultures, struggles, and contributions to American society of these historically marginalized peoples, which have often been untold in US history courses. Given California’s diversity, the California Department of Education understands and knows that each community has its own ethnic make-up and each demographic group has its own unique history, struggles, and contributions to our state. Therefore, under the direction of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and the guidance of the IQC, this model curriculum has been written to include information on the foundational disciplines in ethnic studies, and affords local educational agencies the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to address the demographics and diversity of the classroom. The adaptations should center on deepening or augmenting rather than scaling down any of the four disciplines.

This model curriculum is a step toward rectifying omission of the experiences and cultures of communities within California. Ethnic studies courses address institutionalized systems of advantage and address the causes of racism and other forms of bigotry including,

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- 2 Racism: a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race
  - 3 Ethnicity: an identity marker based on ancestry, including nationality, lands/territory, regional culture, religion, language, history, tradition, etc. that comprise a social group
  - 4 For notes on disciplinary naming, please see chapter 3.

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but not limited to, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia, antisemitism, and Islamophobia within our culture and governmental policies. Educators can create and utilize lessons rooted in the four foundational disciplines alongside the sample key themes of (1) Identity, (2) History and Movement, (3) Systems of Power, and (4) Social Movements and Equity to make connections to the experiences of all students.

School curricula must not only provide content knowledge, but must also equip students with the tools to promote understanding as community members in a changing democratic society.

When schools help students acquire a social consciousness, a conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others, they are better equipped to contribute to the public good and help strengthen democratic institutions.

The role of our public schools to promote understanding and appreciation of its diverse population must be an essential part of the curriculum offered to every student.

Ethnic studies instruction should be a fundamental component of California public education in the twenty-first century. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum helps build the capacity for every young Californian to develop a social consciousness and knowledge that will contribute to the public good and, as a result, strengthen democracy.

## **State Board of Education Guidelines**

In 2018, the SBE approved Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Guidelines based on AB 2016. The following guidelines are based on requirements in the authorizing statute (Assembly Bill 2016, Chapter 327 of the Statutes of 2016), feedback collected from the public at the webinar held on January 9, 2018, and other public comment.

### **1. Statutory Requirements**

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum must reflect the requirements in the authorizing statute as well as other legal requirements for curriculum in California. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following topics:

- The model curriculum shall be written as a guide to allow school districts to adapt their courses to reflect the pupil demographics in their communities.
- The model curriculum shall include examples of courses offered by local educational agencies that have been approved as meeting the A–G admissions requirements of the University of California and the California State University, including, to the extent possible, course outlines for those courses.
- The model curriculum must meet federal accessibility requirements pursuant to Section 508 of the United States Workforce Rehabilitation Act. Content that cannot be made accessible may not be included in the document.

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2. General Principles. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum shall:

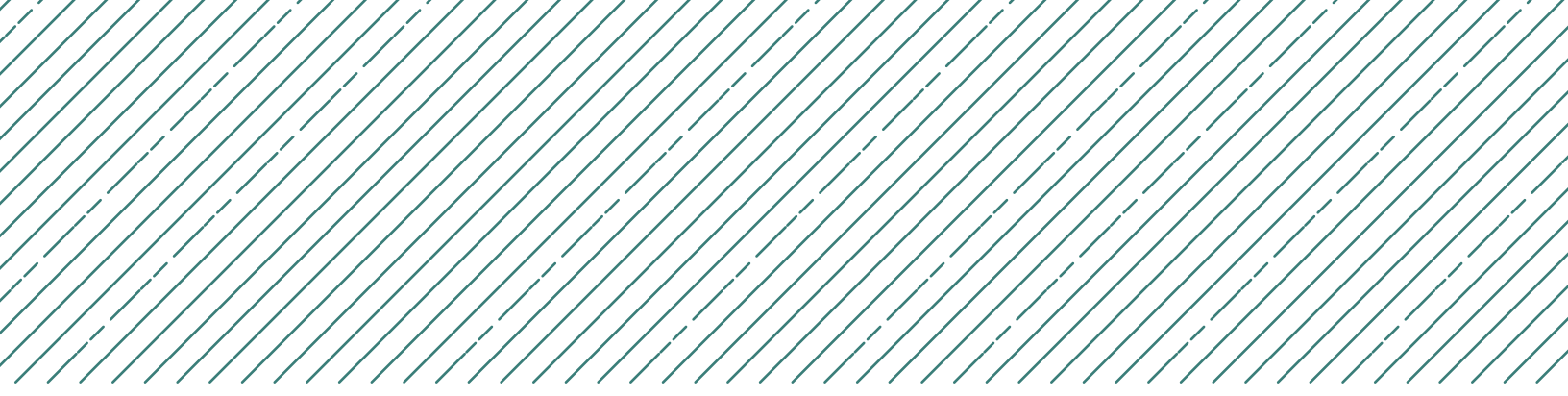
- Include accurate information based on current and confirmed research
- When appropriate, be consistent with the content and instructional shifts in the 2016 *History–Social Science Framework*, in particular the emphasis upon student-based inquiry in instruction
- Promote the values of civic engagement and civic responsibility
- Align to the Literacy Standards for History/Social Studies within the *California Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*, as appropriate
- Promote self and collective empowerment
- Be written in language that is inclusive and supportive of multiple users, including teachers (single and multiple subject), support staff, administrators, and the community
- Encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality, justice, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, etc.
- Include information on the ethnic studies movement, specifically the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), and its significance in the establishment of ethnic studies as a discipline and work in promoting diversity and inclusion within higher education
- Promote critical thinking and rigorous analysis of history, systems of oppression, and the status quo in an effort to generate discussions on futurity and imagine new possibilities

3. Course Outlines. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum shall:

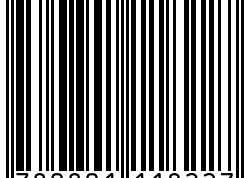
- Include course outlines that offer a thematic approach to ethnic studies with concepts that provide space for educators to build in examples and case studies from diverse backgrounds
- Include course outlines that allow for ethnic studies to be taught as a stand-alone elective or integrated into an existing course (e.g., sociology, English language arts, and history)
- Include course outlines that allow for local, state-specific, national, and global inquiry into ethnic studies
- Have the capability to engage multiple languages and genealogies
- Engage a range of disciplines beyond traditional history and social sciences, including, but not limited to, visual and performing arts, English language arts, economics, biology, gender and sexuality studies, etc.

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4. Audience. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum shall:
    - Be sensitive to the needs of all grade levels and incorporated disciplines, providing balance and guidance to the field
    - Engage pedagogies that allow for student and community responsiveness, validate students' lived experience, and address social-emotional development
    - Be inclusive, creating space for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or citizenship, to learn different perspectives
  5. Administrative and Teacher Support. The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum shall:
    - Be easy to use both for teachers with educational backgrounds in ethnic studies and for those without such experience
    - Provide resources on professional development opportunities
    - Provide information for district and school administrators to support the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum and instruction
    - Provide examples of different methods of instruction and pedagogical approaches
    - Provide support for a collaborative teaching model that encourages teachers to work with colleagues across disciplines, further highlighting the interdisciplinarity of ethnic studies
    - Provide support for the use of technology and multimedia resources during instruction
    - Include access to resources for instruction (e.g., lesson plans, curricula, primary source documents, and other resources) that are currently being used by districts

This model curriculum should not be seen as exhaustive, but rather as a guidance document to pair with existing SBE-adopted content standards and curriculum frameworks, including the *History–Social Science Content Standards* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link2>) and the *History–Social Science Framework* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link3>), the *California Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link4>), the *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link5>), and the *California English Language Development Standards* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/preface.asp#link6>). The *History–Social Science Framework* in particular provides support for the implementation of ethnic studies, including a brief outline of a ninth-grade elective course in the field, and the document overall emphasizes key principles and outcomes of ethnic studies teaching and learning, such as diversity, inclusion, challenging systems of inequality, and support for student civic engagement.



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