

**Recommendation for Incorporation of Ethnic Studies
as a Graduation Requirement**

Santa Barbara Unified School District

October 23, 2018

Recommendation

The High School Graduation Requirements Committee of the Santa Barbara School District recommends that the Board approve the addition of a 5-credit ethnic studies graduation requirement into Board Policy 6146.1 on “High School Graduation Requirements.”

Background

At the national, state, regional, and local level, momentum has been building in the movement to proliferate ethnic studies course offerings and incorporate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement. That momentum is particularly strong in California, which is one of the most diverse states and where disproportionality of student outcomes across demographic groups persists.. Existing state law requires the California Instructional Quality Commission to develop model curriculum in ethnic studies and submit it to the State Board of Education by December 31, 2019. In turn, the State Board of Education shall adopt, modify, or revise the model curriculum for approval by March 31, 2020. Existing law also encourages each school district to offer a course in ethnic studies beginning in the school year following the adoption of the model curriculum. Currently, nine districts in California have ethnic studies as a graduation requirement.

In the local context, many of Santa Barbara’s neighboring counties and districts are also actively pursuing the requirement of course offerings and/or graduation requirements in ethnic studies. In Santa Barbara, gaps in engagement and achievement across student groups are particularly pronounced. A report was made to the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board of Education on June 12, 2018 which provided research-based rationale supporting the recommendation of the High School Graduation Requirements Committee that the District establish a new ethnic studies high school graduation requirement beginning with the graduating class of 2023. The report met with robust community support in the form of comment by members of the public as well as Board members. Additionally, and simultaneously, District staff are committed to designing and implementing curriculum changes and pedagogical shifts to support more culturally proficient instruction in all grades and subject areas. Recently, SBUnified leadership developed a broader framework for the District’s vision to promote cultural proficiency and equity; this framework was formally communicated in a report to the Board at its meeting on September 25, 2018. Copies of previous Board reports are included with this agenda item.

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Approaches to Implementation

Over the past year, SB Unified staff have shepherded the collaborative efforts of the Ethnic Studies Subcommittee of the High School Graduation Requirements Committee to formulate and communicate the following approaches to pursuing the proliferation of ethnic studies course offerings as well as the addition of an ethnic studies graduation requirement:

- *A comprehensive and inclusive approach*

High-quality courses in ethnic studies are inherently interdisciplinary and feature curriculum that is dynamic and highlights intersectionality (an analytic framework that asserts social groups do not exist separately but are interwoven together). Thoughtfully designed professional learning will be required to ensure instructors of ethnic studies courses are appropriately equipped to create positive learning environments in which to deliver course content and facilitate student interaction and learning, as well as to ensure consistency across offerings and school sites. SBUnified is committed to designing a transparent and inclusive process for curriculum development and teacher training that incorporates a wide variety of resources and perspectives. In support of this aim, SBUnified staff plan to engage SBUnified faculty (especially those with experience teaching ethnic studies courses) as well as local partners such as institutions of post-secondary learning (eg UCSB, SBCC) and community organizations and other agencies with a nexus to this project.

- *Three paths to fulfilling the proposed requirement*

The recommendation does not increase the total number of credits required to earn a high school diploma in our district and aims to provide maximum flexibility. Students graduating from SBUnified high schools will still be required to complete 220 credits overall, including 45 elective credits, and will have the option of fulfilling 5 credits of ethnic studies in one of three ways:

1. Completion of a new elective survey course “Ethnic and Social Justice Studies”
SBUnified proposes that two 5-credit courses be developed that can be taken independently or as a 2-part sequence, with the existing “Social Dialogues” course serving as a foundation for developing the new course.
2. Completion of a qualifying “Core-Integrated” English Language Arts or Social Studies course

SBUnified proposes that a College Prep and Honors version of “English 9: Ethnic and Social Justice Studies Emphasis” be developed. Existing courses such as “Mexican-American Literature” should be reviewed to ensure they are eligible to meet Ethnic Studies specifications. These proposed courses, and possible future courses such as “English 12” and “US History,” will simultaneously fulfill graduation requirements for ELA and/or Social Studies, the proposed ethnic studies graduation requirement, as well as UC/CSU eligibility requirements.

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3. Completion of a Dual Enrollment course in Ethnic Studies that fulfills the specifications for Ethnic Studies as validated through the articulation agreement between SBUnified and SBCC

Current SBUnified students in the PEAC program take “Chicano Studies 101” and “Chicano Studies 130.” There are many additional SBCC Ethnic Studies courses that could be accessed by SBUnified students through an expansion of the Dual Enrollment agreement.

Building a robust menu of options as delineated above has the benefit of extending students’ choice in determining which ethnic studies coursework is of most interest, allowing for at-level and advanced options, and providing the opportunity for a student to pursue a thematic ethnic studies strand by taking various ethnic studies courses over multiple years.

Timeline for Implementation

District staff bear responsibility for preparing staff and families for the significant change of adding an ethnic studies graduation requirement and for ensuring high-quality implementation. To this end, we are planning to undertake proactive steps on multiple fronts, even as we anticipate the release of model curriculum.

SY 2018-2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Secure Board approval for new ethnic studies graduation requirement.2. Develop and execute a communication plan to inform all stakeholders.3. Incorporate education about graduation requirement into 4-yr planning and high school course selection processes.4. Determine mechanism for reflecting fulfillment of ethnic studies graduation requirement on student transcripts.5. Conduct an analysis of district capacity and needs related to implementation. Secure additional resources as needed.6. Design and execute a process to develop the ethnic studies graduation requirement course specifications.7. Further develop the menu of ethnic studies course options by engaging in articulation meetings with SBCC to expand students’ access to Dual Enrollment offerings that meet with ethnic studies specifications.8. Design and execute a process to develop the curriculum for specific courses:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Convene current and veteran instructors of existing SBUnified courses which address ethnic studies topics, along with other prospective instructors, with the aim of generating course outlines aligned with anticipated ethnic studies course specifications and model curriculum.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">b. Develop and engage a network of external educational partners with expertise in ethnic studies to contribute to curriculum development efforts.c. Develop the pilot “Ethnic and Social Justice Studies” elective course(s).d. Identify prospective instructors for “English 9: ESJS Emphasis” and develop the pilot curriculum.
SY 2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Pilot two types of ethnic studies courses in at least one high school, including designing and executing a process for evaluating pilot courses in order to inform revisions and expansion for SY 2020-2021:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. “Ethnic and Social Justice Studies” (Explore options and develop a proposal for an appropriate offering for the Alternative Education setting.)b. “English 9: ESJS Emphasis” (College Prep and Honors versions)2. Implement coherent core-integrated options district-wide as applicable (“Mexican-American Literature”).3. Review, and integrate as appropriate, ethnic studies model curriculum once released by the California Department of Education.
SY 2020-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Offer “Ethnic and Social Justice Studies” and “English 9: ESJS Emphasis” (CP and H) at all four district high schools.2. Continuing reviewing, and integrating as appropriate, ethnic studies model curriculum.
SY 2021-2022	Continue review and revision of courses to ensure high-quality implementation.
SY 2022-2023	Pending Board approval, ethnic studies graduation requirement in effect for all grades and for each year moving forward.