

# Ethnic Studies Committee

March 2022 Board Presentation



# Ethnic Studies Committee Members

## **Parents**

Earl (Tim) Espinoza  
Hushi Natividad  
Edie Washington  
Sudha Chandi  
Elizabeth Sanchez

## **ARUSD Educators**

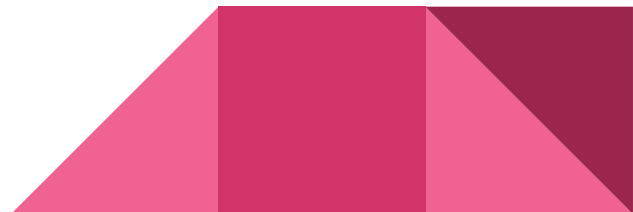
Jonathan Almerido  
Alondra Rios-Cervantez  
Jesus Lozano  
Elvia Diaz

## **Community Members**

Maha Elgenaidi  
Delaney Bantillo  
Chaslie Lamas  
Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano  
Jacqueline Ramirez

## **Committee Chairs**

Camille Llanes-Fontanilla  
Dr. Iván Rosales Montes



# RESOLUTION 37 – 19/20

## ALUM ROCK UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### RESOLUTION 37 – 19/20

#### ESTABLISHING AN ETHNIC STUDIES ADOPTION COMMITTEE IN THE ALUM ROCK UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**WHEREAS**, California has one of the largest and most diverse student populations in the nation. Ethnic minorities account for over 71 percent of the student population, with more than 90 languages spoken in public schools. The Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is representative of these diverse demographics that make our State great; and

**WHEREAS**, students from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds make up approximately 98% percent of the student population in Alum Rock Union Elementary School District; and

**WHEREAS**, Alum Rock Union Elementary School District has a commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District recognizes that the racial and ethnic gaps existing across a variety of important student outcomes in the United States are both disturbingly large and stubbornly and historically persistent. For example, data from the recently released 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that, on average, the mathematics knowledge of eight-grade Black and Latinx students in public schools lag behind their white peers by an amount equivalent to roughly two to three full years of learning. Furthermore, while roughly 14 percent of white students in public high schools fail to graduate on time, the corresponding dropout rates for Black and Latinx students are roughly twice as large (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014); and

**WHEREAS**, studies show that Ethnic Studies curriculum helps to narrow the achievement gap and the opportunity gap for students of color as well as benefits white students; and

**WHEREAS**, Ethnic Studies enhances equity in the school curriculum; and

**WHEREAS**, Ethnic Studies, at its most fundamental level, is an academically and intellectually rigorous educational/curricular approach and content-area that includes units of study, courses, or programs that are centered on the knowledge and perspectives of an ethnic or racial group, reflecting narratives and points of view rooted in that group's lived experiences and intellectual scholarship. Ethnic Studies is seen as a vital part of the solution in eradicating these large and stubbornly and historically persistent achievement and opportunity gaps as previously described, which prevent districts from ensuring that "every child's potential is achieved." Ethnic Studies also provides a growing example of "culturally relevant pedagogy," and that it refers to interdisciplinary programs of study that focus on the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities with a particular emphasis on historical struggles and social movements; and

**WHEREAS**, incorporating Ethnic Studies courses and content into standard elementary, middle school, high school, and post-secondary/university curriculum is a means to accomplish equity, justice, academic rigor and excellence, as well as promote diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging; and

**WHEREAS**, Ethnic Studies promotes respect and understanding among races, supports student success and teaches critical thinking skills, civic engagement skills, and builds citizenship for all students; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2011 the National Education Association published, *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies*, which reported a positive impact in all students but especially students of color. Results showed Ethnic Studies benefited students in observable ways: they became more academically engaged, did better on achievement tests, in some cases graduated at higher rates, and developed a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016 the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis published, *The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum*, which reported the promise of instructional practices and content aligned with the cultural experiences of minority students with results indicating that assignment to this course increased ninth-grade student attendance by 21 percentage points, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23. These surprisingly large effects are consistent with the hypothesis that the course reduced dropout rates and suggest that culturally relevant teaching, when implemented in a supportive, high-fidelity context, can provide effective support to at-risk students; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all students, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, income, sexual orientation, or disability, and is guided by the vision "All Alum Rock students will be ready for the future in a diverse and competitive world"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District recognizes the need and importance for culturally relevant training and on-going professional development of educators, administrators, and staff in regard to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as well as race, ethnicity, class, privilege, implicit bias and systems of oppression; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District recognizes the need and importance for culturally relevant instruction and curriculum for students in regard to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as well as race, ethnicity, class, privilege, implicit bias and systems of oppression; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Board of Education Board philosophy is "every student in the district, regardless of gender, special needs, or social, ethnic, language or economic background has a right to a high-quality education that challenges the student to achieve to his/her fullest potential." (0410 Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Board Philosophy #2); and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 331 (AB 331) would add a course of Ethnic Studies to be a high school graduation requirement beginning the school year of 2024-2025, which would affect more than 1.8 million California public high school students;

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 3310 (AB 3310) would require that each of the 73 community college districts to provide courses in Ethnic Studies at each of its 115 member campuses by the 2021-2022 academic year and the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies in order to graduate by the 2024-2025 academic year, which would affect more than 480,000 CSU students; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460) would require the California State University (CSU) system to provide courses in Ethnic Studies at each of its 23 member campuses by the 2021-2022 academic year and the completion of one 3-unit course in Ethnic Studies in order to graduate by the 2024-2025 academic year, which would affect more than 2.1 million community college students;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Board of Education gives direction to the Superintendent to follow district process for considering new curricular content by creating an Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee. Consistent with the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District curriculum adoption process, the stakeholder group will research Ethnic Studies curriculum, review relevant materials, consider the scope of piloting the curriculum with the ultimate goal of presenting a recommendation to the Superintendent and ultimately, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Board of Education. Updates will be provided to the Board at each regular Board meeting and final recommendations on any district-wide implementation and inclusion in the 2021-2024 LCAP will be presented by the Educational Services Division outlining the pace and cost of implementation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Ethnic Studies Adoption Committee will schedule its first meeting as soon as September 2020. Staff will set a timeline for completion of this process.


**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Education of the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District at a regular meeting held on this 11th day of June, 2020, by the following vote:

# Purpose

Per ARUSD Board Approval on June 11, 2020, staff was directed to establish an **Ethnic Studies Committee**, comprised of a cross-section of stakeholders.

"The stakeholder group will **research Ethnic Studies curriculum**, review relevant materials, consider the scope of piloting the curriculum with the **ultimate goal of presenting a recommendation to the Superintendent and ultimately, the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Board of Education.**"

*"Updates will be provided to the Board at each regular Board meeting and final recommendations on any district-wide implementation and inclusion in the 2021-2024 LCAP will be presented by the Educational Services Division outlining the pace and cost of implementation."*



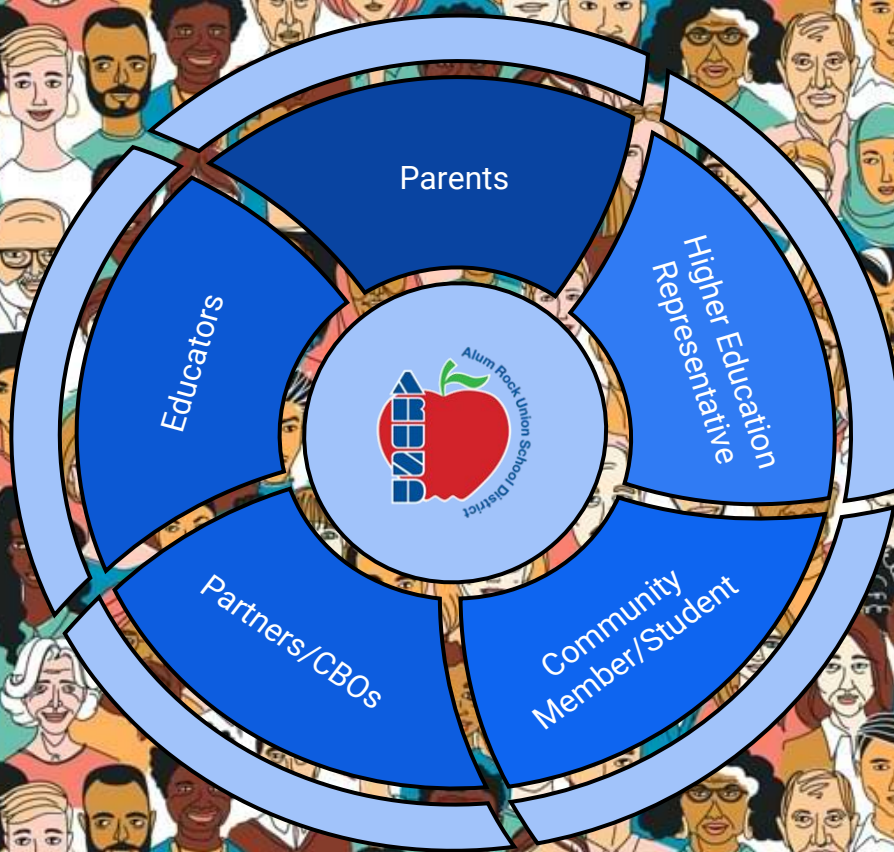
# Roots of Ethnic Studies



"Historically, Ethnic Studies emerged from social movements in the 1960s as students, educators, and scholars of color pressed schools, school districts, and textbook companies to produce and offer curricula that reflect the diversity and complexity of the United States population" (Tintiangco-Cubales, et al., 2014).

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**Alum Rock Ethnic Studies Committee**

# ARUSD Ethnic Studies Vision

Ethnic Studies at the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is a way of being that is student centered, relevant, inclusive and centralizes the histories, cultures, and intellectual traditions of the students and communities represented in ARUSD classrooms and schools. Through ongoing self-reflection, ARUSD staff will connect the intersectional experiences of the community they serve, bridging formal educational spaces to develop students' critical understanding of the world so our district's young people may leverage their education towards the betterment of their communities.

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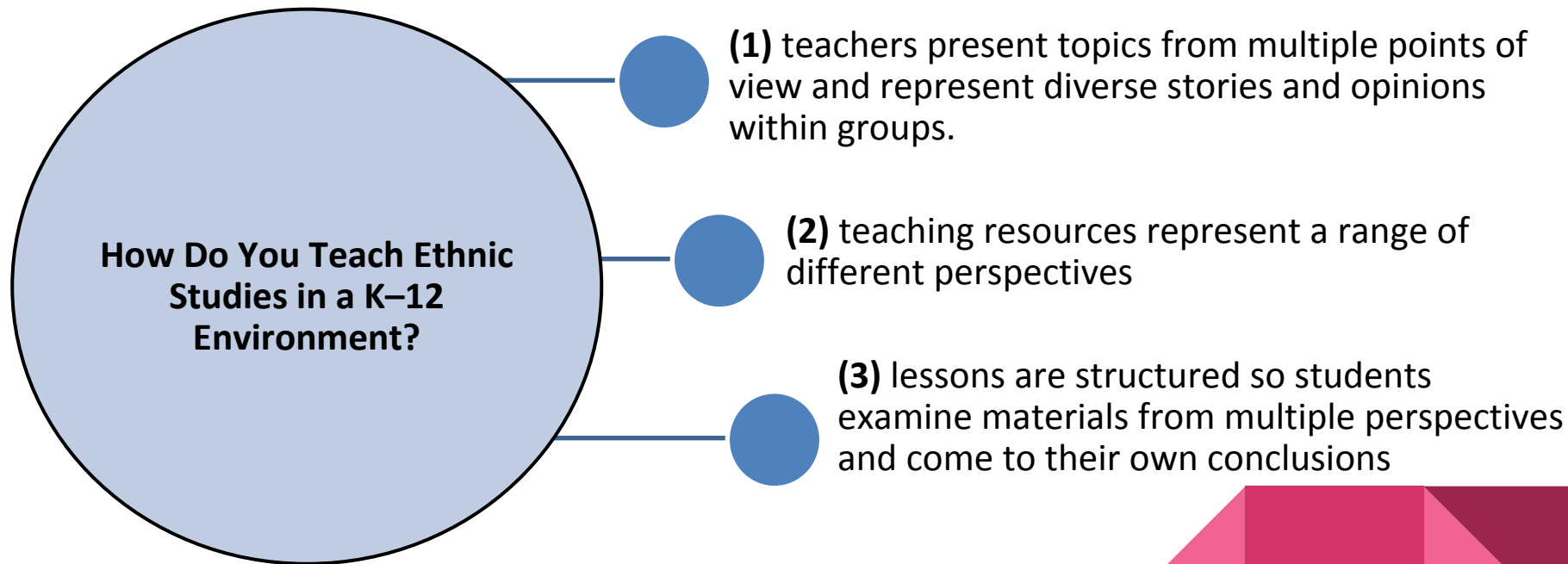
# Purpose

This ARUSD Ethnic Studies policy and principles are intended to assist the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District in providing guidance to staff and community in welcoming, understanding, and educating its vibrant students who are attending ARUSD schools. This policy explicitly focuses on Ethnic Studies from the ground up surfacing community cultural wealth -- taking the input of families, educators, community partners within the Alum Rock School District community -- to center the realities of racial oppression and assets and strengths to enhance teaching and learning, and educational outcomes.

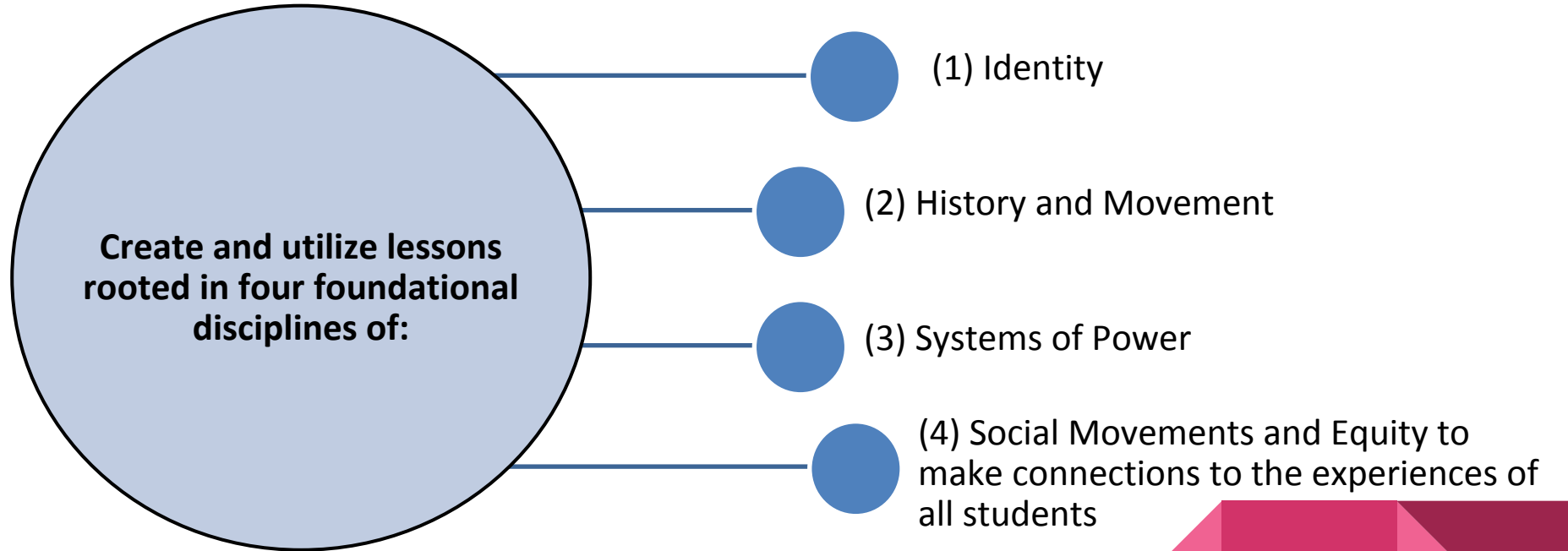
The impetus for the ARUSD Ethnic Studies policy and guiding principles comes from a number of important related developments across the United States and in California. The United States has a long history of settler colonialism and our educational institutions, structures, and ideologies that permeate into our schools and classrooms are part of that history. Our perceptions of how students learn and how we should serve them is often grounded in implicit biases that may dehumanize young people and families and perpetuate systems of oppression. The State Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education on March 18, 2021 moves us beyond improvement efforts focused solely on normalized aspects of dominant culture (i.e., white, euro-centric, English dominant) to provide more equitable learning conditions and culturally responsive engagement of historically minoritized young people.



# From the CDE Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum



# From the CDE Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum



# Key Principles & Practices

These principles and practices are intended to **guide all levels of ARUSD towards a coherent and aligned set of practices, services, relationships, and approaches to teaching and learning**. Underlying this systemic application of the Principles is the foundational understanding that is a shared responsibility of all educators, regardless of subject/content area, and that all levels of the schooling system have a role to play in ensuring the access and achievement of the young people who attend our schools.



# Principle 1: Uplifting Narratives

Ethnic Studies is shaped by the narratives of those both doing the learning and teaching.

- Ethnic Studies creates an opportunity for students and teachers to share their own stories, histories and perspectives, creating mutual respect and shared learning. Everyone is both a student and a teacher, with value and voice.
- "Strong Ethnic Studies teachers continuously reflect on their own racial identities, their relationships with diverse ethnic communities, and the impact of dominant Eurocentric perspectives on their own views and sense of self. As a result, effective Ethnic Studies teachers learn to take action individually and collectively toward social justice and self-decolonization. Both whites and people of color need to engage in this process of critical self-reflection, but because they occupy different positions in a racial hierarchy, the issues they must work on are significantly different" (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2019, 21).

# Practice: Uplifting Narratives

- **Essential Question:** Why do we need to tell our stories?
  - Uncovering what these narratives look like and how they impact marginalized communities
  - History and narratives and history and of the local area (i.e., local community tours; partner with local experts)
- In the classroom have an intentional practice to surface narratives; create trust and safety; practice what that looks like; oral narrative (easier entry point for students) - can be multilingual
- Outline key themes over the year - talking about our own identities through the lens of social markers (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) and what stereotypes are associated with those identities. Then, telling stories that countered stereotypes associated with those identities.
- Instructional practice will need to focus on how we can get students comfortable to share and trust building as a community (sharing is not equal).

# Principle 2: Centering Cultural Wealth

Ethnic Studies centralizes the histories, cultures, and intellectual traditions of the students and communities represented in ARUSD classrooms and schools.

- The Alum Rock community reflects immense **cultural wealth**. The lived experiences and traditions of students, families, teachers and staff create a diverse and robust learning environment that is reflective, relevant and engaging. Students see themselves and are drawn to lifelong learning and growth.
- "Strong Ethnic Studies teachers interact with local communities of color on an ongoing basis: They are community responsive. They recognize the importance of building relationships with their students and students' parents and wider communities on a regular basis. The teachers build curriculum around those relationships as they prepare young people for leadership in addressing issues in their schools and communities" (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2019, 23).



# Practice 2: Centering Cultural Wealth

- Centering community cultural wealth, in practice, will require teachers to be able to understand their own positionality, and the ways in which the perspectives from which they come impact how they view their own communities as well as the communities that they teach, especially if those are not the same.
  - Within classroom and site levels, this requires an inventorying and understanding of our rules, policies, and practices in order to understand what it is that we explicitly or implicitly value.
- Community cultural wealth can be highlighted through family interviews that kids conduct so that they can name parts of their identities and communities that are important, even if they aren't what dominant culture values.
- Sites and classrooms can uplift the celebrations of the various ethnic groups by understanding which cultures are represented in the classroom and create space for them to share and reflect and be seen in the school. Example, at the beginning of the year, instruct a family activity where the student outlines the calendar year. (What are important holidays, celebrations, etc. that are important to each family. This provides the teachers and administrators with good data points as to what is important; gives an opportunity to be really reflect the representation and cultural wealth of the school.

# Principle 3: Interdisciplinary Approaches

Ethnic Studies is **interdisciplinary** (i.e., ELA, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Music and electives) and includes multiple methods.

- Ethnic Studies comes with specific history, knowledge and pedagogy that educators must learn. Ethnic Studies affords opportunities to look beyond our positionalities, and consider how the intersections of race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and other aspects of our identities and lived experiences, manifest as different power structures in the classroom and in our community. Ethnic Studies examines and authenticates the values, contributions, and lived experiences of historically marginalized groups.
- "Ethnic Studies programs work to understand and analyze intersectional identity, relationships, and dynamics of power in order to resist oppression and help actively change the world for the better" (Cuauhtin, 2019, 38).
- Strong Ethnic Studies teachers use culturally responsive pedagogy. They know how to connect students' questions and lives with Ethnic Studies content, are able to lead students through a process of identity exploration and transformation in relationship to Ethnic Studies, and believe in their students academically (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2019, 22).

# Practice 3: Interdisciplinary Approaches

- Creating space for inter-disciplinary discussions and planning across teams within the school site community.
- Choose a themes and then use the key themes to build out interdisciplinary plan to show how its all interlocking within a school community.

# Principle 4: Eliminate Racism

The purpose of Ethnic Studies is to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression--restore, balance, correct mistakes that have been made in the past and continue to happen.

- Ethnic Studies creates the spaces and conditions to affirm self-identities; build mutual understanding; cultivate community; deepen a critical analysis of systemic racism; and address root causes; allowing us to collectively confront racism and oppression, to uplift the values of democracy.
- "Strong Ethnic Studies teachers sense the purpose of Ethnic Studies goes beyond teaching untold or undertold histories: It also helps students critique structures of racism and its personal and social impact, as well as challenge oppressive conditions...Ethnic Studies pedagogy, as an anti-racist project, encourages both teachers and students to critique racial oppression at the institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels while also showing how each level influences the other" (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2019, 21).

# Practice 4: Eliminate Racism

- For teachers, it means being able to engage in conversations about identity
  - “Getting Real About Race” from Learning for Justice:  
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2015/excerpt-getting-real-about-race>
  - *Let’s Talk!* from Learning for Justice:  
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>
  - Education to dive deep in the History of Racism  
<https://www.amazon.com/What-Does-Mean-White-Counterpoints/dp/1433111152>

# Principle 5: Ethnic Studies is a Way of Being

- Ethnic Studies is a way of being- it is love, liberation, empowerment. Ethnic Studies helps us reflect and surface the blindfold of oppression to awaken our consciousness to see the world and our history critically.
- "Ethnic Studies, if it is to be truly transformative, must become part of the way in which a district thinks of itself and how it teaches content and works for/with students" (Beckham & Concordia, 2019, 322).



# Practice 5

- Ethnic studies is not taught in isolation. Ethnic studies is not 30 minutes in the day, but rather ethnic studies is how we approach our planning and instruction.

# Ethnic Studies Committee Recommendations

We recommend that the ARUSD governance team take the following steps to advance Ethnic Studies across all ARUSD schools.

1. Implement the **Board Resolution** regarding Ethnic Studies and enhance the **Administrative Regulation** 0415 on Equity, in alignment with Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), to encompass all ARUSD's Ethnic Studies principles.
2. Allocate an appropriate **budget** in alignment with the LCAP for the program development, implementation and integration of Ethnic Studies across ARUSD schools for the use of actualizing the principles and vision of ARUSD Ethnic Studies.
3. Develop and implement a **multi-year plan** of professional development with smart goals for the ARUSD community. The goal of professional development is to deepen Ethnic Studies as defined in the key principles so we may impact teaching and learning across all ARUSD schools.
  - a. Establish a dedicated **Ethnic Studies instructional lead** (full-time staff or consultant) that leads the **program development**.
  - b. Establish a task force Ethnic Studies educators, who can advise and support the District's Instructional Lead through program development, piloting and initial **implementation**. Ongoing advisory support is also recommended.

# Proposed Timeline

## Spring 2022

- Enhance **Board Policy** on Equity to encompass all ARUSD's Ethnic Studies principles.
- Allocate an appropriate **budget** for the program development, implementation and integration of Ethnic Studies across ARUSD schools for the use of actualizing the principles and vision of ARUSD Ethnic Studies.

## Fall 2022

- Develop and implement a **multi-year plan** of professional development with smart goals for the ARUSD community. The goal of professional development is to deepen Ethnic Studies as defined in the key principles so we may impact teaching and learning across all ARUSD schools.
- Establish a dedicated **Ethnic Studies instructional lead** (full-time staff or consultant) that leads the **program development**.

## Spring 2023 - Fall 2023

- Establish a task force Ethnic Studies educators, who can advise and support the District's Instructional Lead through program development, piloting and initial **implementation**. Ongoing advisory support is also recommended.
- Expand implementation pilot

## Fall 2024

- Full implementation

# Appendix

# Alum Rock Community Reflections & Aspirations

## *Summary perspectives from key constituents (Parents & Educators)*

- The ARUSD Ethnic Studies program positively uplifts a sense of self in our students and represents and respects the very diverse student population.
- Parents and families have access to the learning and are supported with resources and tools to engage in Ethnic Studies support and learn alongside their students.
- Together, the ARUSD community affirms the importance of this program and is able to honor and celebrate its existence, even in the face of challenges (political, financial, etc.)
- This program is adequately resourced and has materials (books, magazines, video, histories) that honor our histories and families.
- ARUSD educators have the support, resources, tools, professional development and capacity to embed this work in their pedagogy.

# Ethnic Studies Tool Kits and Cited Readings

- [California Department of Education Model Curriculum](#)
- [Learning for Justice](#)
- [Liberated Ethnic Studies](#)
- [Zinn Education Project](#)
- [Muslim Heritage](#)
- Tintiangco-Cubales, Allyson, et al. "Toward an ethnic studies pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research." *The Urban Review* 47.1 (2015): 104-125.
- Sleeter, Christine E., and Miguel Zavala. *Transformative ethnic studies in schools: Curriculum, pedagogy, and research*. Teachers College Press, 2020.



# Questions?



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