



SDUHSD Board Meeting - Thursday, September 12, 2024 5:00pm
Item 10 G: Unit 1 Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum

The Board should **delay the vote** on Unit 1 because the review process has not been thoroughly or properly conducted, there was no district-wide communication about the community engagement night, and there has been inadequate time to receive and reflect on public input. The instructional materials are not only incomplete, but also controversial and fail to comply with Board Policy 6144 on Controversial Issues.

The current lack of transparency and good faith engagement with the community's concerns can still be addressed.

We urge the Board to allow more time for reviewing our concerns, create additional listening opportunities for public input, and ensure full compliance with BP 6144 before proceeding with the vote.

TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 1) The first community engagement meeting for Unit 1 curriculum was not properly noticed to encourage community participation. In fact, it appears there was an effort to minimize the publicity about the meeting, and the curriculum was not shared in advance. The effect is that the community could not engage.
- 2) It is unfair to all district stakeholders to only allow 3-4 business days to review this much curriculum content. **The remaining review periods should be increased to at least two weeks** so parents can review all the material thoroughly and give quality feedback, instead of being rushed.
- 3) Openly accessible links to all resources in the curriculum should be provided, instead of forcing people to look all of them up on their own. Some links are working, but many links still require permission to access.

- 4) All slides that will be used in the course should be provided for review before the vote as well. Some are now accessible, but it's not clear if all are. There is an abundance of missing instructional material related to each lesson.
- 5) If the District is sincere about working together with families, then we must have transparency on the development of the required ethnic studies course.
- 6) **Delay the vote** so the community has a reasonable amount of time to review the proposed material and until the Board can learn more from the community about their concerns regarding Unit 1. Commit to being fully transparent and open to the concerns of the community going forward.

9TH GRADE ENGLISH IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE OPTION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 7) The District has a lot of choices about how to implement the Ethnic Studies graduation requirement. The Board should have had a public discussion about the options and voted on the implementation of this curriculum in 9th grade English. This is by itself a very controversial decision and should be considered in public, not unilaterally decided by staff. **Delay the vote** until that decision can be discussed at a public meeting as it should have been.
- 8) What is the current 9th grade English curriculum (regular and honors) and what will be eliminated to make time for ethnic studies curriculum? The District has refused to make public the existing curriculum and syllabus for 9th grade English (regular and honors) at each school site. The board would be negligent to vote on Unit 1 without understanding what it will replace in such an important foundational class as 9th grade English. **Delay the vote** until the District specifically explains how Units 1-4 will impact 9th grade English (regular and honors).
- 9) Ethnic Studies is a complex and advanced topic if it is done well. It should be obvious to professional educators that a foundational understanding of American History and World History are a prerequisite for understanding the context of much of the Ethnic Studies curriculum. Ninth graders have had neither US History or World History and therefore they do not yet have the knowledge to think critically about such content or debate the ideas presented in Unit 1. **Delay the vote** until the District staff makes a credible argument that 9th graders have the necessary historical knowledge to benefit from a well prepared ethnic studies curriculum.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY 6144 - CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

- 10) The Board must acknowledge that the entire proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum is a controversial issue. Specifically, the policy states "The Governing Board recognizes that

the district's educational program may sometimes include instruction related to controversial issues that may arouse strong reactions based on personal values and beliefs, political philosophy, culture, religion, or other influences." For the Superintendent, any Board member, or any staff member to disagree with that statement would be boldly disingenuous. With that said, it is incumbent on the board to require the District to comply with [Board Policy 6144](#). **Unit 1 violates almost every single one of the 8 guidelines in this policy.**

- 11) **Delay the vote until the Board can review its own policy on Controversial Issues and review a revised version of the proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum that is in full compliance with the policy.**

THE ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL CURRICULUM PROMOTES ANTISEMITISM

- 12) Notably, Unit 1 of Lesson 9 analyzes the theory of intersectionality and includes a reference to Lesson 31 of the ESMC, [Iceberg of Identity](#) (page 372 of the ESMC). It is not clear in this draft of the SDUHSD proposed curriculum if this lesson will be based on the sample lesson in the ESMC. What is clear is that the sample lesson provided is outright antisemitic. How can it be accepted by the Board as is if you don't have the information about what will be taught?

Delay the vote until the District can provide training for the ES Committee by a reputable Jewish organization on Jewish history, culture and how to identify antisemitism in instructional materials. Lesson 9 needs clarity as to exactly what material will be used to explain the theory of intersectionality.

SOME MATERIAL IS NOT SUITABLE TO THE AGE AND MATURITY OF SDUHSD STUDENTS

- 13) Some of the proposed Unit 1 curriculum is not age appropriate. There are materials written for second graders ([Where Are You From?](#), [A Bear That Wasn't](#)) which is simply a waste of instructional time and insulting to the intelligence of SDUHSD 9th graders. The exercise in Lesson 11, ["What is your Name?"](#) is seriously lacking the rigor expected of a high quality 9th grade English curriculum. To potentially replace exposure to Homer, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Maya Angelou, Upton Sinclair, J.D. Salinger, or any of the other great authors typically assigned in 9th grade English, with this childish moralistic "literature" is educational malpractice, and it most certainly violates Guideline #1 of BP 6144. **Delay the vote** until the District staff can review the material for appropriate level of maturity and rigor.

APPENDIX

Links:

CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/ethnicstudiescurriculum.pdf>

SDUHSD Proposed Ethnic Studies Unit 1:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sduhsd/Board.nsf/files/D8XPPU6589B1/\\$file/Ethnic%20Studies%20Unit%201_%20Identity%20\(PENDING%20BOARD%20APPROVAL\).pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sduhsd/Board.nsf/files/D8XPPU6589B1/$file/Ethnic%20Studies%20Unit%201_%20Identity%20(PENDING%20BOARD%20APPROVAL).pdf)

SDUHSD Ethnic Studies Engagement Plan:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sduhsd/Board.nsf/files/D6BTSU78D221/\\$file/Ethnic%20Studies%20Engagement%20Plan%202024-25%20Presentation.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sduhsd/Board.nsf/files/D6BTSU78D221/$file/Ethnic%20Studies%20Engagement%20Plan%202024-25%20Presentation.pdf)

Board Policy 1644:

<https://www.sduhsd.net/documents/Policies/6000%20Instruction/6000%20new/BP%206144%20Controversial%20Issues.pdf>

SDUHSD Ethnic Studies FAQ:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/18zzV3lndSD4J3dsEiocRczJLiP1UMw47lashFsN0uxo/pub>

Lesson 9 - Iceberg of Identity: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/ethnicstudiescurriculum.pdf>

Where Are You From?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqaE1Skn6Y>

A Bear That Wasn't

<https://www.amazon.com/Bear-Wasnt-Dover-Childrens-Classics/dp/0486466191>

What is your Name?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ky4EpLchNrtK80-zrLWwuIbOvp_YDCdNgb5Y5rVC5To/

Unit Overview & Lessons	Key concepts/ Learning objectives	Materials	Missing materials	BP 6144	Comments	Suggestions
Unit Overview Identity	"We" before "me"			Left political bias, imbalanced, emphasizes collectivism over individualism	"We" before "me" promotes the doctrine of collectivism, a cultural and political ideology that prioritizes the needs of a group over the needs of the individual.	<p>Please consider "we" and "me." The self is both autonomous and relational. This overview would be better if it includes a perspective on individualism, the rights and responsibilities of the individual, and the differentiation of the individual during adolescent development.</p> <p>Please consider the book, Brainstorm, by Dr Dan Siegel, and his widely respected work on MWE Me + We, mindfulness, and the changes that occur in the adolescent brain during development.</p>
Lesson 1 Getting to Know You		Puzzle piece activity	Missing materials		The Puzzle Piece instructions are unclear. One-pager and visual representation/art instructions are incomplete.	Provide the missing materials
Lesson 2 Community building		Child of the Americas	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source

Lesson 3 Land/ Labor Acknowledgment	Identify the components of a land labor acknowledgment, research, write, and engage in land labor acknowledgment in the classroom	Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment , CSUSM toolkit		Left political bias, imbalanced, encourages students to engage in a "struggle against colonialism," to compensate Indigenous people for their emotional labor, and to commit to returning land, promotes negative stereotyping of Americans and white students as oppressors based on their immutable characteristics, missing adequate factual information, not age appropriate	The materials in this lesson go too far and are not appropriate for 14 year olds. This lesson does not provide adequate factual information or context. Students have not taken US History yet. It is inappropriate to encourage students to engage in political activism. It is inexcusable to teach children that they are "here because [they] have unearned privilege from the history of genocide." The history of genocide in the United States can and should be taught without shaming students personally.	Remove this lesson or change the supplemental materials to remove stereotypes, personal degradation, and calls for political activism. Consider narratives and stories written by Native Americans instead to educate students about history. Please consider the book, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigeous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist and member of the Potawatomi Nation, which weaves memoir, indigenous storytelling, and the themes of ecological stewardship and gratitude for the natural world.
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Lesson 4 Social Contract	Building Norms and social contracts	Communication and Collaboration Rubric	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source
		Discussion rubric	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source

Lesson 5 History of Ethnic Studies	Intro to TWLF, Implicit Bias	The Fight for Ethnic Studies (PBS)		Left political bias, imbalanced, encourages political activism, missing adequate factual information	The documentary does a good job of presenting the original goals of the TWLF. However, it leaves out some of the more violent associations of the organization. It also frames tactics like disrupting classes and interfering with university functioning as a positive thing. Students should be exposed to more points of view to encourage critical thinking	Add resources to provide a better education about the TWLF; show how similar protest tactics fueled by antisemitism over the last year have created a hostile environment for Jewish college students; balance the importance of free speech and the rights to protest with the importance of civility and other methods for civic engagement
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Lesson 6 Group Identity - Who Are We?	Students will analyze identity through poetry	Ted Talk "My Identity is a Superpower-Not an Obstacle" by America Ferrara				<p>This activity might be improved with a greater selection of poetry.</p> <p>Poems to consider: Immigrant Haibun by Karen An-Wei Lee, Postcard from Kashmir by Asha Shahid Ali, I am Goya by Andrew Voznesensky.</p>
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Lesson 7 Identity and Place (Geographical)	Students will identify how different places can impact identity, ES Outcome recognize intersectionality	Reflective Writing: Map of Neighborhood	Missing materials		No materials are provided for this activity.	Provide the missing materials
	Intersectionality	"When People Ask Me Where I'm From"		Missing context, intersectionality is not defined	The lesson plan as a whole lacks a clear purpose and provides only sparse learning materials. Only one audio recording. There is a reference to intersectionality as an outcome and no materials or context on that topic. Intersectionality is not defined	

Lesson 8 Identity and Place (Internal Space/Place)	Students will identify how different places can impact identity. ES Outcome recognize intersectionality	Where Are You From? By Yamille Saied Mendez		Not age appropriate, book is written for 4-8 year olds (too young)	This is a lovely book, but it isn't appropriate for 9th graders. See link to publisher: https://www.harpercollins.com/products/where-are-you-from-yamille-saied-mendez?variant=33007871000610	Please select age appropriate materials
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	Intersectionality	"The Way to Rainy Mountain" by N Scott Momaday	Missing materials	Missing context, intersectionality is not defined	The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source. "The Way to Rainy Mountain" and the excerpt by Chief Seattle were available on the internet. They are both good selections; however, there is a lack of factual information to contextual these passages. Please add context. These lessons should be given with more background about the history of the Native Americans and the settlers in the region.
		"Message to Franklin Pierce" by Chief Seattle	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source

Lesson 9 Introduction to Self & Family	Students will analyze how identities are formed and how intersectionality relates to self and family	"What don't people get about what it's like to be you?"	Missing materials		Is this a simple writing prompt? The instructions are unclear	This activity would be better if it explored the concept of our common humanity , encouraged students to consider similarities with others as well as differences, and mentioned the importance of personality, character, self-esteem and personal values when considering identity, and the idea that some parts of identity can change over time .
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Intersectionality

"Iceberg" prompt	Missing materials	Missing context, missing factual information	It is not clear which version of this exercise is intended. The ESMC has an exercise that specifically addresses Jewish identity. If so, context and input from the Jewish community is needed. The material is antisemitic .	If the Ethnic Studies curriculum were designed for 12th graders, these topics could be better explored in a balanced way. This article by Coleman Hughes presents a different perspective on intersectionality that might be contrasted with the views of Crenshaw: https://quillette.com/2020/01/14/reflections-on-intersectionality/
		Missing context, intersectionality is not defined	For any version of the Iceberg activity: Students are encouraged to focus on their immutable characteristics: gender, race, ethnic appearance, body type, and only some other aspects of self, like language and religion. Although the activity suggests that people are complex and encourages students to consider what might be "below the water line," which includes interests and hobbies, career and ethnic background, there is a strong emphasis on differences when considering identity.	
Kids Explain Intersectionality		Not age appropriate (too young)	This video is juvenile and inappropriate for 14 year olds. It was made for elementary school age children.	Please select age appropriate materials

Identity Chart Activity	Missing materials		No materials are provided for this activity.	Provide the missing materials Please consider the book, Don't Label Me, by Irshad Manji, might be worth considering. Manji emphasizes the value of moral courage when dealing with the complexity of individual experiences and identities. She challenges both conservative and progressive viewpoints.
Vignette from The House on Mango Street	Missing materials		The vignette is not provided	Provide the missing materials
Iceberg of Identity Notes to Structured Writing	Missing materials		No assignment is explained	Provide the writing prompt
Kimberle Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?		Missing context, imbalanced, left political bias, not age appropriate (too advanced)	Intersectionality is defined. The policy proposals and social change movements that have arisen from intersectionality are highly controversial. This topic deserves greater care when presented to students. For example, the public policy of "defunding the police" derives from intersectionality theory. This has had devastating consequences for low income neighborhoods and black communities in cities like Chicago. It is indoctrination to promote a social theory without mention or analysis of the failures of its application in public policies. These topics are too complex and advanced for 9th graders.	Please select age appropriate materials
Cross curricular connection FAIR Act	Missing materials		No explanation of resource or purpose	

Lesson 10 Who am I? How do others see me? How do I see others?	Students will understand how their perceptions impact the perceived identity of others	Social Contract	Missing materials		No explanation of activity	Provide the missing materials
	Intersectionality	Think Notes: Exploring Shifting Identities and Labels	Missing materials		No explanation of activity	Provide the missing materials
		Meme: Perspectives of Teacher's Identity and Lives	Missing materials		No explanation of activity	Provide the missing materials
		Farewell to Manzanar		Not age appropriate, missing adequate factual information	This is an excellent excerpt, but it can not be taught without a strong foundation in US History and World History, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and why and how the United States entered WW2.	This material would be more appropriate in an Ethnic Studies course designed for 12th graders.
		Pre-Writing assignment	Missing materials		What is Name Exploration? The assignment is not clear	
		Home Extension Opportunity	Missing materials		The Pre-Writing assignment is not clear	

Lesson 11 Names and Identity: How are Names and Identities Connected?	Students will understand and explore how names connect to identity	Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli		Not age appropriate, recommended reading age is 10-13 years		Please select age appropriate materials
	Intersectionality	Uzo Aduba	Missing materials		No materials are provided for this assignment	Provide the missing materials
		"Song for My Name"	Missing materials		No materials are provided for this assignment	Provide the missing materials
		Reflection	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source

Lesson 12 Names and Identity: How Authors Use Poetry to Express Identity	Students learn specific annotation strategies for analyzing a poem to uncover purpose	"Two Names Two Worlds" by Jonathan Rodriguez	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source
	Intersectionality	The Changeling	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source

Writing Assessment: Poetry - Where I'm From	Students develop an identity poem	Rubric	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source
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Writing Assessment: Personal Narratives/ Autobiographical Incident/ Memoir	Students develop a personal narrative	"Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan	Missing materials		The link is restricted	Activate the link to an open source
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