

Fresno Unified School District
Board Agenda Item

AGENDA ITEM A-2

Board Meeting Date: August 12, 2020

AGENDA SECTION: A

(A – Consent, B – Discussion, C – Receive, Recognize/Present)

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve

(Adopt, Approve, Discuss, Receive, etc.)

TITLE AND SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution No. 20-02 in Support of an Ethnic Studies Program in Fresno Unified School District

ITEM DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Board an opportunity to adopt Resolution No. 20-02 in support of an Ethnic Studies program in Fresno Unified School District. Resolution No. 20-02 will be available on or before August 7, 2020.

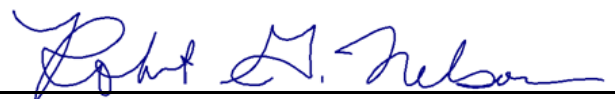
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There is no fiscal impact to the district at this time.

PREPARED BY: David Chavez,
Chief of Staff

DIVISION: Superintendent's Office
PHONE NUMBER: (559) 457-3566

CABINET APPROVAL: David Chavez,
Chief of Staff

SUPERINTENDENT APPROVAL:



BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

**FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION NO. 20-02
IN SUPPORT OF AN ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAM AND GRADUATION
REQUIREMENT
IN FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

WHEREAS, Fresno Unified School District Board of Trustees is devoted to their core beliefs and commitments. “Fresno Unified is a place where: Diversity is valued, Educational excellence and equity are expected, Individual responsibility and participation by all is required, collaborative adult relationships are essential, and, parents, students and the community as a whole are vital partners.”; and

WHEREAS, Fresno Unified School District is committed to providing excellent educational opportunities to all of our students, without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, income, sexual orientation, or disability, and is guided by the core values of equity, inclusiveness, and universally high expectations; and

WHEREAS, Fresno Unified serves a diverse population with more than 59 languages spoken by our students and their families. The student body is culturally diverse with a population that is 8.7% African American, 11.4% Asian, 67.7% Hispanic, 0.6% Native American, 0.3% Pacific Islander 9.7% White (not Hispanic) and 1.8% multiple ethnicities; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of academic research shows the importance of culturally meaningful and relevant curriculum; and

WHEREAS, Ethnic Studies is a “critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color within and beyond the United States.” As a separate discipline from History, Ethnic Studies specifically analyzes “the ways in which race and racism have been, and continue to be, powerful social, cultural, and political forces and their connections to other axes of stratification, including gender, class, sexuality, and legal status.”; and

WHEREAS, the role of ethnic studies is to change the curriculum to promote critical thinking regarding the intersection between systems, social and ethnic minorities status so that material is substantially inclusive of all students and the achievements, experiences, and perspectives of the individuals and people of color in history that have often been hidden behind Eurocentric curricula in K-12 education; and

WHEREAS, not learning about the comprehensive history and contributions of people of color in America contributes to lower test scores and achievement gaps for African American, Latinx/ Chicanx and Native American students; and

WHEREAS, African Americans, Latinx, Asian Americans, and Indigenous peoples have also been misrepresented in history textbooks and there is “abysmal ignorance” surrounding their histories; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the National Education Association (NEA) published The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies, which reported ethnic studies has a positive impact on students of color.

Results showed that ethnic studies benefited students in observable ways: they became more academically engaged, increased educational outcomes on academic tests, improved graduation rates, and developed a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment; and

WHEREAS, the Ethnic Studies curriculum can help close the achievement gap, reduce drop-out rates, and increase graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, the existing Ethnic Studies curriculum being developed by Fresno Unified teachers provides students with interdisciplinary reading, writing and analytical skills; and

WHEREAS, the District is committed to preparing our youth to be college and career ready and graduate 100% of our students; and

WHEREAS, ethnic studies pedagogy, when it is incorporated into the core curriculum, has beneficial results for children of all ethnicities, including white children, as early as 5th grade, and some experts conclude that it can be integrated even earlier in a child’s education; and

WHEREAS, the California Teachers Association (CTA) has publicly declared their support for the AB331 ethnic studies initiative.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fresno Unified School District Board of Education directs the superintendent to modify its existing graduation requirement to include a 10-credit, two-semester length course in the field of Ethnic Studies which meets CSU/UC A through G requirements by the 2021/22 school year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an anti-racist, robust, interdisciplinary, vertically aligned Ethnic Studies program be financially and structurally pursued. This program shall include curriculum for both elementary and secondary students.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee overseeing the implementation of ethnic studies for all Fresno Unified students is comprised of K-12 educators, college level professors, parents, students, and community members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee begin meeting immediately to develop recommendations as to how ethnic studies can be implemented and accessible to all students in the Fresno Unified School District and ensure all meetings are open to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee become an ongoing structure that will exist to ensure effective outcomes, teacher training and successful implementation. Recommendations will be implemented on an ongoing basis as they are approved by the Superintendent and Board of Education.

ADOPTED THIS 12th DAY OF AUGUST 2020.

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

Keshia Thomas, President

Robert G. Nelson, Superintendent