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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Statement Regarding Ethnic Studies Curriculum

PITTSBURGH, PA October 22, 2026— Pittsburgh Public Schools strongly disputes the inaccurate and misleading characterizations of its Ethnic Studies curriculum presented in a recent report by the North American Values Institute (NAVI). The report draws sweeping conclusions from materials that do not represent the full District curriculum and mischaracterizes the purpose, content, and instructional approach of the course.

The District's Grade 12 Ethnic Studies course is grounded in inquiry-based learning and designed to expand students' understanding of history, culture, identity, and the diverse experiences that have shaped American society. Its purpose is not to promote a particular political or ideological viewpoint, but to equip students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to examine complex issues, evaluate evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and develop their own informed conclusions.

Contrary to NAVI's assertions, Pittsburgh Public Schools does not train students to become political activists or require them to adopt particular political positions. The course follows principles of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, which emphasizes historical inquiry, evidence-based reasoning, and informed civic participation. Students explore community issues, conduct research, evaluate potential solutions, and consider the responsibilities of citizenship. Encouraging students to think critically about their communities and understand the many ways that individuals participate in civic life is a fundamental component of education, not political indoctrination.

Equally concerning is the report's characterization of how Jewish identity and antisemitism are addressed. The District's Ethnic Studies curriculum does not categorize Jewish Americans as oppressors or reduce Jewish identity to questions of race or privilege. Rather, it recognizes the complexity and diversity of Jewish experiences and includes instruction on Jewish history, culture, resilience, and contributions to American society.

Importantly, students examine the devastating impact of antisemitism through Pittsburgh's own history, including the October 27, 2018, attack at the Tree of Life synagogue. Instructional resources include oral histories from four survivors, the documentary *Repairing the World*, and lessons exploring Jewish traditions, cultural identity, and historical memory. The District has also engaged members of Pittsburgh's Jewish community and provided professional learning opportunities through organizations including the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh and the 10.27 Healing Partnership to strengthen educators' understanding of Jewish history, antisemitism, and the experiences of Jewish communities.

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The assertion that the course excludes differing perspectives is also inconsistent with its instructional design. Students engage with primary and secondary sources, historical documents, scholarly works, oral histories, and diverse community voices. Teachers are supported through professional learning focused on facilitating respectful, evidence-based discussions that encourage students to question assumptions, examine competing interpretations, and form independent conclusions.

The mission of Pittsburgh Public Schools' Ethnic Studies program, developed collaboratively by students and teachers, is to foster unity, empowerment, self-awareness, and connection by providing authentic opportunities to explore diverse lived experiences and appreciate history and culture beyond a traditionally Eurocentric perspective.

Our responsibility as educators is not to tell students what to think, but to teach them how to think critically, independently, and thoughtfully while engaging with a range of diverse perspectives. That commitment guides the District's Ethnic Studies curriculum and our broader approach to teaching and learning.

Pittsburgh Public Schools remains committed to providing academically rigorous instruction that reflects the diversity of our communities, respects the experiences and identities of all students, and prepares graduates to engage thoughtfully and responsibly in an increasingly complex world.

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