

AB XX (Alejo):
Implementation of Ethnic Studies

Last updated: January 10, 2016

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

Under existing law, the Instructional Quality Commission's (IQC) is to develop and recommend curriculum frameworks to the State Board of Education (SBE). In 2014 IQC began its review of the draft the Social Sciences framework. On the completion and adoption of the framework, California school districts will have the option of purchasing the Ethnic Studies framework for grade 9.

This bill will require California school districts to immediately implement an Ethnic Studies model curriculum to all grade 9 as an elective for social sciences.

PROBLEM & NEED FOR THE BILL

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 District schools.

Given California's annual increase in its population's diversity, it is especially important that students build knowledge of the various racial and ethnic groups in our state. Expanding the high school curriculum to include ethnic studies will help students relate to historical events and have a better understanding of their own history and history of other neighbors. Learning of the struggles for equality, will better teach students what it means to be an American.

The National Education Association confirms that ethnic studies have a positive impact on students of color. The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies reports that ethnic studies benefited students in observable ways: they became more academically engaged, increased outcomes on academic tests, improved graduation rates, and developed a sense of self-efficacy and personal empowerment.

Developing ethnic studies programs in public high schools is an integral part of cultivating a classroom environment that is accepting of diverse cultures. It is vital for young people to learn about their history, but also important for them to feel like they can change their communities in positive ways.

An ethnic studies curriculum will help close the achievement gap by reducing student truancy, increasing student enrollment, reduce drop-out rates, and better prepare Californian youth to be college prepared and career ready.

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD DO

AB XX instructs for the IQC to advise, assist and make recommendations to the Superintendent regarding the development of the ethnic studies model curriculum beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

After the development of the model curriculum each school district will need to offer the class to their students as an elective for grade 9.

BILL STATUS

Expected to be referred to Assembly Education Committee.