



SBE Board Meeting

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**An Ethnic Studies
Concept Paper**

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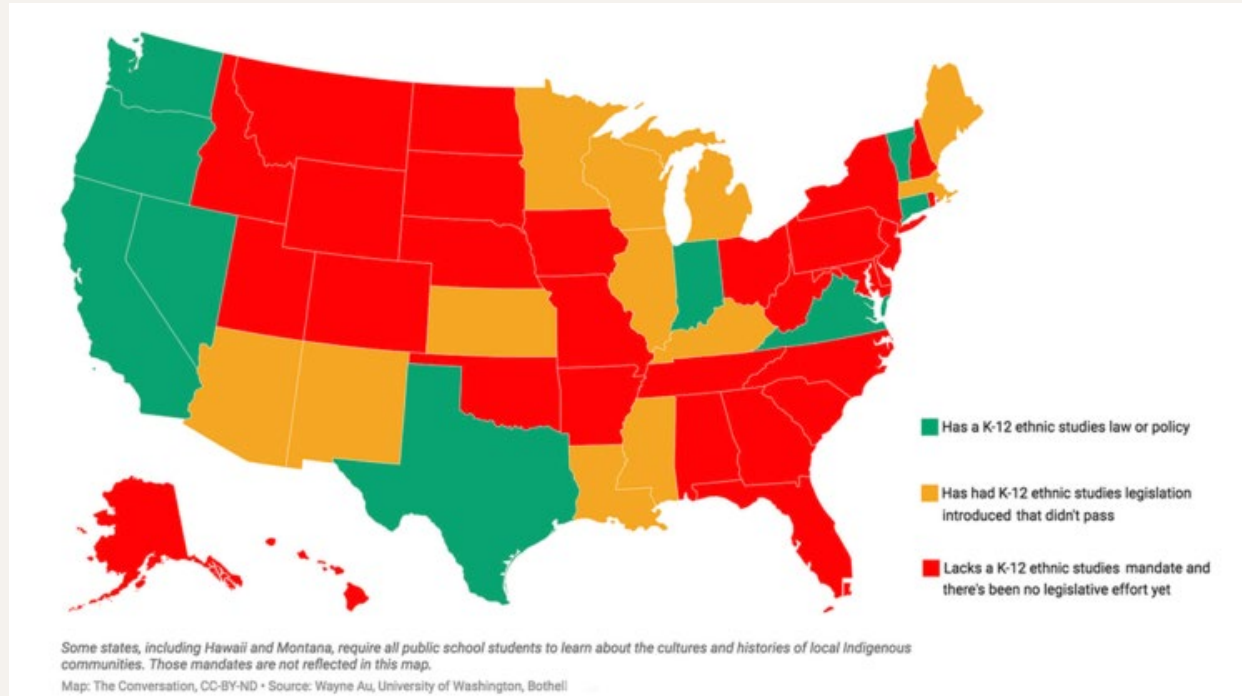
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Introduction

The Landscape of Ethnic Studies in the U.S.



The Latest on Ethnic Studies in Washington State

2018

- The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5023, requiring the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to establish an Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee (ESAC) and identify resources and materials for teaching ethnic studies in grades 7–12.

2019

- The Legislature passed Senate Bill 6066, expanding the scope of work for ESAC to include all grades K–12.
- Washington Ethnic Studies Now (WAESN), a non-profit organization, was created to support ethnic studies implementation.

2020

- The State Board of Education (SBE) hosted a student panel, where students spoke on the necessity of ethnic studies

2021

- The SBE in Washington State adopted a resolution of intent to establish a statewide ethnic studies graduation requirement
- The ESAC published the Washington State Ethnic Studies Framework



Ethnic Studies: An Overview

Ethnic Studies: Overview



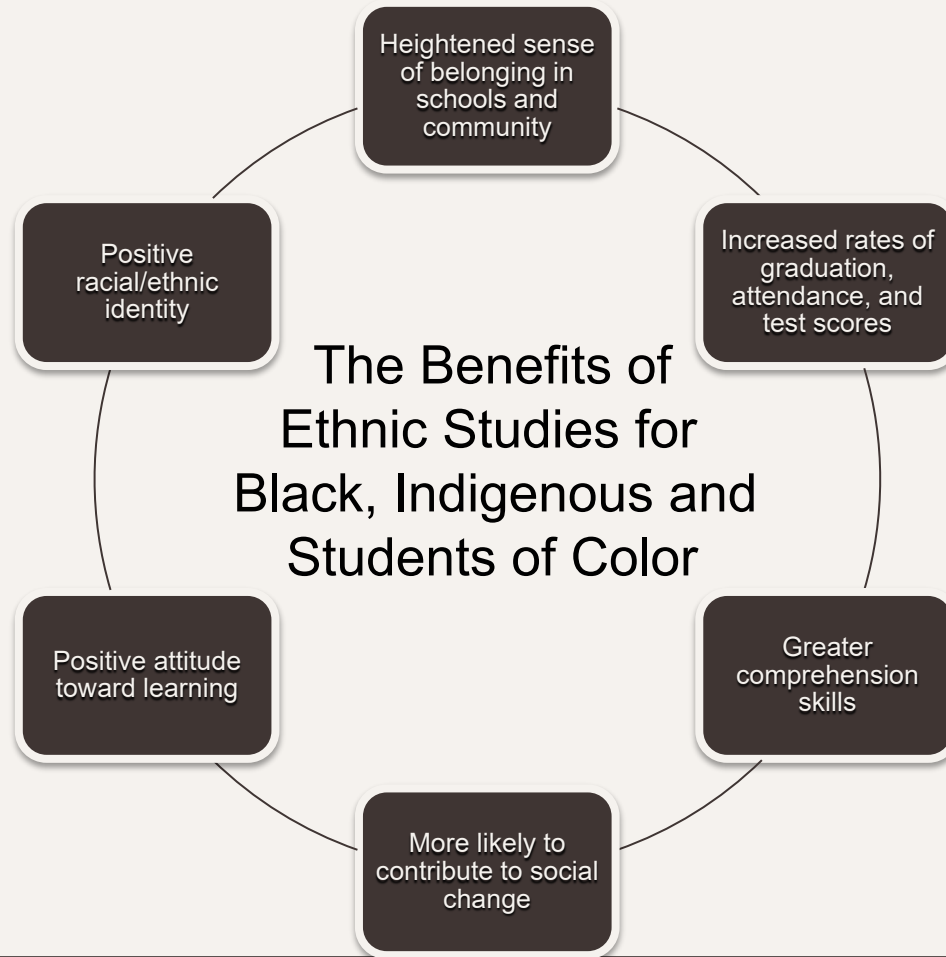
Origins of ES



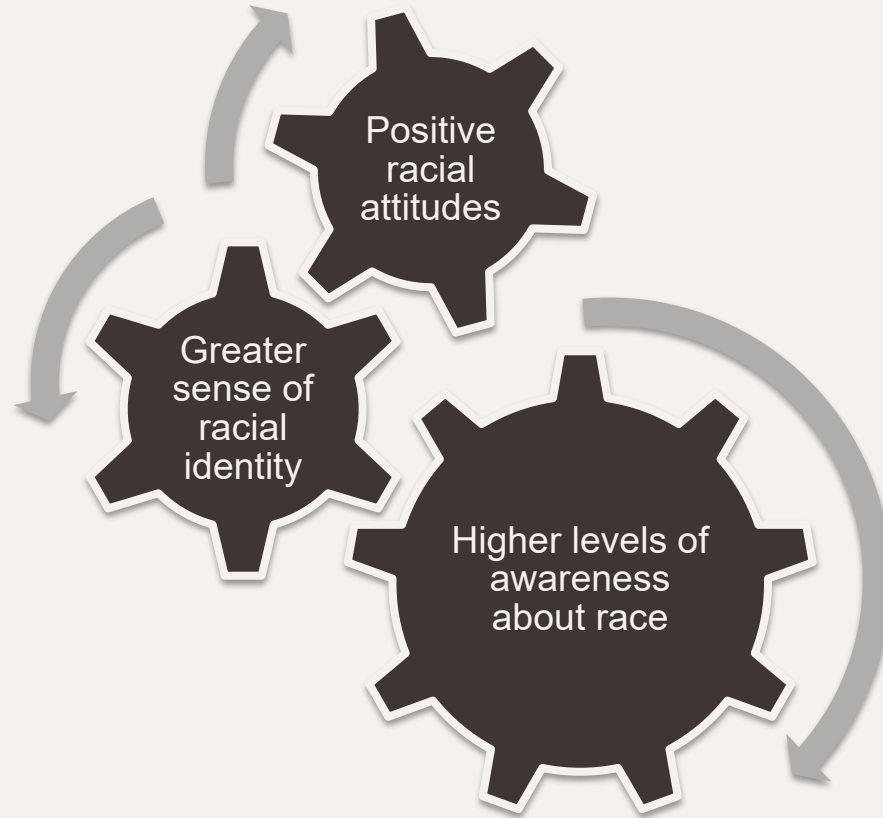
Benefits of ES

Origins of Ethnic Studies

- The philosophical roots of ES date back as early as the 1900s when scholars of color argued that the histories, perspectives, and contributions of marginalized peoples be included in traditional disciplines.
- By 1968, several organizations like the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State College (now SFSU) proposed the establishment of an ethnic studies college among other things.
- Ethnic studies has not without its limitations. Since its inception, ethnic studies has faced resistance from supporters *and* opponents.
- Ethnic studies is dynamic. As we move forward, an important question to keep in mind:
 - *How can we expand ethnic studies in the present-day while maintaining fidelity to its foundational roots?*



The Benefits of Ethnic Studies for White Students





Findings from Listening Sessions

Purpose of Ethnic Studies

- Ethnic studies seek to challenge and destabilize systems of oppressions.
- Historically, K-12 U.S. curricula has been dominated by Eurocentric views.
- Ethnic studies will create the conditions for marginalized peoples' ways of knowing to be centered.

**“TEARING DOWN
THE DEFAULT”**



Goals of Ethnic Studies

Promote Self-Empowerment

Ethnic studies should aim to affirm, validate, and honor students' experiences.

Create a Sense of Community

Ethnic studies should foster a space where everyone feels like they belong.

Develop Well-informed Citizens

Ethnic studies should raise students' awareness of marginalized peoples experiences and the increasingly growing multiethnic society.

Prepare Leaders for Social Change

Ethnic studies should prepare global citizens to engage and contribute to social change.

“I THINK WE NEED
REPRESENTATIONS THAT ARE
DEEP AND NOT SHALLOW...
AND I THINK WE NEED A
CURRICULUM THAT WOULD
ALLOW STUDENTS TO THINK
ABOUT ALL THESE DIFFERENT
LAYERS OF IDENTITIES AND
AN INTERSECTION OF
IDENTITIES.”

Implementation

Interdisciplinary approach: Ethnic studies proponents suggest that ES be implemented as a graduation requirement and across all subjects, rather than as a stand-alone course, elective or single subject.

**“THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT
THAT EVERYONE SHOULD LEARN,
AND ETHNIC STUDIES CAN AND
SHOULD BE EMBEDDED IN EVERY
SINGLE SUBJECT MATTER.”**

Conclusion



Ongoing Challenges

- **Inclusion of all Perspectives** – Some participants expressed concerns about whose perspectives will be included in ethnic studies. For example, a student commented that it will be important for ethnic studies to recognize Jewish narratives, who often face anti-Semitism.
- **Teacher Support** – Many educators shared that they are worried about resistance from stakeholders that oppose ethnic studies. Others expressed concerns about the limited training that teachers have around ethnic studies.
- **Added Student Pressure** – Parents are concerned that an ethnic studies requirement will add more stress on students.
- **Compromising Ethnic Studies Mission and Values** – Some ethnic studies proponents are worried that in the process of implementation, the integrity of ethnic studies will be compromised.
- **Intentional Engagement with Tribal Nations** – Some Tribal nations have expressed concerns about their involvement with ethnic studies initiatives. The reason is that Indigenous peoples are more than ethnicities, they are Tribal nations with sovereign rights.

Recommendations

- **Graduation Requirement** – Continue to support the creation of an ethnic studies graduation requirement, including the development of an ethnic studies model that outlines the mission, goals, and principles of ethnic studies in Washington State.
- **Community Engagement** – Strengthen and expand initiatives on community engagement and partnerships to ensure communities are engaged in the process, sharing knowledge and expertise, and contributing to local decision-making efforts.
- **Student Partnerships** – Establish and maintain a formal relationship with student-led organizations to ensure ethnic studies aligns with the needs of the students it seeks to serve.
- **Educational Collaboration** – Continue collaboration efforts between OSPI and educational partners to advance ethnic studies and realize its mission of providing a quality humanizing education.
- **Tribal Consultation** – Conduct Tribal consultation with Washington Native American Tribes and Tribal organizations in developing and before the implementation of ethnic studies programs.

Recommendations (cont.)

- **Strategic Plan** – Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for implementation, including an initial pilot that will enable the state to gather data about what works and doesn't work about the new requirement.
- **Funding** – Develop a funding model that includes how funding will be allocated for a statewide ethnic studies mandate in order to ensure its vital sustainment and strategic growth.
- **Professional Development** – Increase investments in high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities for all educators.
- **Research** – Invest in ongoing research and inquiry around implementation challenges and successes in districts across Washington State, led by researchers that are knowledgeable in Ethnic Studies frameworks.