



PASO ROBLES
JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
THE DISTRICT OF EXCELLENCE

SUPERINTENDENT: CURT DUBOST
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**WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED
FOR MARCH 23, 2021
RE
ETHNIC STUDIES COURSE**

18



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Re: March 23

1 message

Geoffrey Land <gdland@pasoschools.org> Fri, Mar 19, 2021 at 12:46 PM
To: Erin Haley <ehaley@pasoschools.org>
Cc: Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>, Monica Silva <msilva@pasoschools.org>

Erin, Kim and Monica.

For the March 23 Meeting, I am requesting that the following speakers be allowed to present as a block during public comment on the Ethnic Studies agenda item .

- 1 Mel Gonzalez
- 2 Sharon Elmer
- 3 Juanetta Perkins
- 4 Laura Esquivel
- 5 Dr. Denise Isom (for the dunk at the buzzer!)
- 6 Dr. Susana Lopez/Carey Alvord (joint statement)

Thank you in advance for your willingness to work with our request on this important agenda item.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey Land

On Tue, Mar 16, 2021 at 3:43 PM Geoffrey Land <gdland@pasoschools.org> wrote:

Thanks, Erin and Kim and Monica,
We're pulling together the list of five speakers.
I will forward them to you by the end of the week.
They will be voices of support for the Ethnic Studies class.
Thanks,
Geof

On Tue, Mar 16, 2021 at 2:53 PM Erin Haley <ehaley@pasoschools.org> wrote:

Hi Geoff,

I believe this can be arranged. I have included Kim Holmes (Interim Executive Assistant to the Superintendent) and Monica Silva as they can support the arrangement of this. :)

On Tue, Mar 16, 2021 at 11:16 AM Geoffrey Land <gdland@pasoschools.org> wrote:

Hi, Erin,
Is there any way to have 5 of the public comment speakers be placed sequentially?
We have ...
Dr. Isom
Juanetta Perkins
Laura Esquivel
and two students.

Thanks. Please let me know if there's a formal way to request that.

Thanks,

--
Geoffrey D. Land, Social Studies Department, PRHS
Civics & Government, Honors Dual Immersion World History
Field Studies Collaborative
Club Advisor, A.C.T. Club (Activists' Coalition for Tomorrow)
Pronouns: he/him/his (Why Pronouns Matter)

IB #5



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

letter for 3/23/21 Board meeting

1 message

Denise A. Isom <disom@calpoly.edu>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 10:55 AM

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

I am unable to attend tonight's PRJUSD's Board meeting but would like the attached letter to be read regarding the proposed Ethnic Studies course.

Also, find the letter pasted below in case there is a problem with the attachment.

Thank you,

Dr. Denise Isom

~

Hello, my name is Dr. Denise Isom and I am the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion & CDO at Cal Poly, SLO and before stepping into that role I was the Chair of the Ethnic Studies (ES) department. I also am part of a consultant group (made up of faculty from the School of Education and Ethnic Studies) that advise school districts on issues of equity, campus climate, and development of their own ES courses, requirements, and departments. Most salient to this discussion, I am a proud resident of Paso Robles, and it is from all of those vantage points, that I offer my support for this effort.

As educational leaders, you are likely cognizant of the growing possibility of a State mandated K-12 ES requirement in California and well aware of the array of research that establishes the academic benefit of Ethnic Studies courses from GPA to attendance. The case for ES classes can be made from those criteria alone, but I'd like to call attention to the another set of impacts ES courses have been found to produce. Beyond direct academic gains, research on ES classes also speak to the role they can play in identity development, sense of belonging, and preparation for the future.

As students find themselves in the story of America, they also find validation, voice, and value. In the complex history of the United States and analytical examination of our social world, young people become inspired to build a better future, and become invested in their own growth and development. It short, it helps them dream.

We have an opportunity, through this course, to not only expand curricular offerings in line with State efforts; to not only help equip all of our students to thrive in an increasingly diverse world; to not only enhance academic achievement for all students, but to change the lives of our students, so that they can change the world.

Again, I offer my full support for this class, and thank the teachers, staff, and students who have worked tirelessly on this effort, and thank you Board, for your time and attention.

Dr. Denise Isom
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
California Polytechnic State University



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

In support of Ethnic Studies Class offering for PRHS Students

1 message

Jamie Arreola <jamieactivates@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Fri, Mar 19, 2021 at 11:00 AM

Dear School Board,

I am so happy to see that the Paso Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Education Committee is bringing to you for a vote, an exciting offering for Paso Robles High School students.

I am a teacher, counselor, and business owner in the Bay Area, and I got my start at Paso Robles High School, and I support the addition of ETHNIC STUDIES CLASS. I assure you every student in the Bay area has this offering and has had this offering for years.

I can testify that students will graduate from PRHS and move out into communities around the world, and a class on Ethnic Studies will prove essential to navigate in our multicultural world.

While you may choose to continue to see Paso Robles as a sleepy little town practically transported out of the midwest by people like my own great-grandparents and parents who settled there in the early 1900s, times change, places need to adapt, and there has never been a better time than now.

In the interest of all students of every color and creed, an ethnic studies class gives content and context to our current challenges and opportunities to take care of our town and each other.

Especially helpful will be the coursework that shares stories of diverse people contributing to our country, state, county and city. Whenever a person can see themselves in the stories from history and civics, they gain self-identity, self-confidence and stretch their ability to believe they can make a difference in the world.

I believe that this board will support a healthy and robust curriculum for our current and future PRHS students. PRHS students are our future!

Thank you to the Paso Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Education Committee for being aware of student needs and bringing this forward.

Please vote to support ETHNIC STUDIES class for PRHS.

Sincerely,
Jamie Goins Arreola, M.A. Ed.
Jamie Activates Health and Wellness Coach
Owner Organica Fresh Food Company
YWCA GGSV Board of Directors
PRHS Alumni 1987



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

I support Ethnic Studies. Please Read this email at meeting.

1 message

Martha Jimenez <bilingual101@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Fri, Mar 19, 2021 at 12:31 PM

Paso Robles School Board,

I support Ethnic Studies in all of the schools in the County.

They teach our children about culture, customs, languages, art, acceptance, and open-mindedness.

Ethnic Studies can reduce the cruelty of racism and hate of those that are different from us.

Our children can grow up to be kinder and more understanding of the global world we live in.

Martha Jimenez RN



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Paso Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education Committee

1 message

'Michael James' via Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>

Fri, Mar 19, 2021 at 3:25 PM

Reply-To: Michael James <zamueljones@yahoo.com>

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Greetings Bearcats, 😊

My name is Wesley West aka Wes West and I am PRHS graduate ('97). I have always praised the of Paso Robles school district for including the minority students in various programs. When I attended Flamson Middle school, in the early 90s, I was in the Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) Program. It was a program for underrepresented groups in higher education. I loved it because it helped me understand that just because, statistically, I was probably not goin to make it to college, that it was possible.

Then, when I attended PRHS, from 1993-1997, I was apart of the Advancement Via Individual Achievement or A.V.I.D. program. This was also a program geared to help underrepresented students in college attain the tools and knowledge necessary to make being a college attendee/graduate a reality. Upon graduating from PRHS, I attended California Poly State University, SLO. I graduated in four years with a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management.

I still look back on all the help I received in the Paso Robles school district to help me achieve what I call "Success." The MESA and AVID programs really paved the way. I am very appreciative of the fact that PRHS did not turn its back on the minority students. I love the fact that PRHS has been a leader on the Central Coast when it comes to diversity.

In conclusion, I'm surprised PRHS doesn't already have and Ethnic studies class or curriculum. PRHS has blazed a trail in prior years in providing ethnic students ways and means to attain their educational goals so let's keep it goin. Our world is evolving so let's try to keep the students informed or ethnic issues and concerns.

Peace and Blessings, 😊

Wes West

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

School Board Meeting 3/23/21 - Item I.8. Approve Ethnic Studies Course at PRHS: Multicultural America

1 message

Laura DeHaven <lalabee09@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Sun, Mar 21, 2021 at 5:42 PM

To the Members of the Paso Robles School Board,

As a community member, I am in support of the Paso Robles School District offering the Ethnic Studies Course. I have reviewed portions of the proposed textbook.

It is time for us to educate all students about the impacts of racial constructs and systemic racism that have benefited those of us who are white and have devastated the communities of Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

I'd suggest this course be a requirement for graduation from Paso Robles School District high schools rather than an elective.

Thank you,

Laura DeHaven
830 Pocahontas Ct.
Paso Robles, CA
(805) 636-8294



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Comment for the Paso Robles School Board Mtg. on Tues

1 message

Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti <jpedrott@calpoly.edu>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 12:59 PM

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

I will not be able to phone in during the session on 3/23/2021, but would request for this email statement (below) to be read during the open session.

Thank you!

To the Paso Robles School Board:

I'm writing to show support for the offering of an Ethnic Studies (ES) course at Paso Robles High School. I would first like to applaud the forward-thinking nature of those in your district who would put forward such a proposal, as it seems likely that the state will soon consider requiring an ES course at the high school level. Those schools who are already looking forward will no doubt have a more prominent seat at the table as decisions are made about learning objectives, curriculum used, and personnel requirements for staffing these courses. To be one of the "early adopters" in this way will unquestionably benefit Paso High. As a parent of children in another local district, I also hope this might pave the way for others to adopt a similar course.

I have worked at Cal Poly for 18 years: I am currently the Associate Dean for Diversity and Curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts, and am filling the interim role as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs within the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion this year. Prior to my current roles, I was a Professor in the Department of Psychology and Child Development. I mention these roles to give you a sense of the context from which I come in terms of educational expertise, but also in experience in working with students fresh from high school. In the psychology department we see students from across Cal Poly, and throughout the years it has become more and more clear that students who have had some sort of education in cultural context before coming to college do much better in our classes scholastically. In addition, they have better interactions with their peers across the university, contribute more thoughtfully to discussions, and are more skilled at being able to understand others' perspectives, even if they disagree. I would argue that this skill is particularly crucial in our current state in our country.

Research, such as that from the National Education Association, also supports the assertion that Ethnic Studies courses lead to better engagement and better overall academic performance for students of all races. Ethnic Studies, with its strong focus on cultural self-awareness, and knowledge of those with cultural backgrounds different from one's own can allow a student's mind to open, such that they may see the world through more than one viewpoint and experience. This leads to more understanding and empathy for others, as well as a broader set of skills for working in today's diverse society - all needed for becoming a good citizen in today's world.

I hope the board will support students' future education and approve the proposal to offer an ES class.

--

Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Diversity and Curriculum | College of Liberal Arts

Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs | Office of University Diversity & Inclusion

Professor | Dept. of Psychology & Child Development

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

**Public comment regarding: item I8. I.8. Approve Ethnic Studies Course at PRHS:
Multicultural America.**

1 message

Erin Cuarenta <erincuarenta@hotmail.com>
To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 1:33 PM

Please read this comment during the public session on 3/23/21.

We are writing in support of adoption of the proposed ethnics studies curriculum. We feel that this a vital part of all student's education and urge all board members to vote yes. Thank you
Erin and Gabriel Cuarenta (San Luis Obispo County residents and parents)



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Public Comment about Ethnic Studies (please read aloud)

1 message

Kelen Macharia <klnatl21@gmail.com>
To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 2:35 PM

Dear PRJUSD Board Members,

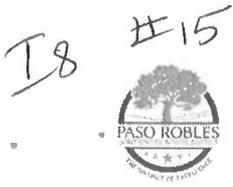
As a Junior at Paso High, I am in full support of the Ethnic Studies course and would love it if it were offered this Fall. Over the past few years, I've noticed that Paso is physically becoming more diverse. I think an Ethnic Studies course at PRHS would diversify our thinking. After almost 12 years of the same European/U.S. history, I've found history classes to be a bit boring. However, with Ethnic Studies we are constantly developing our understanding of race, culture, gender, social class, etc. as it pertains to the world. We'd be learning things that wouldn't necessarily be offered in a typical history class. Recently, PRHS BSU did an educational calendar on Instagram. I learned more from those short 24 days than I have from the small amount of Black history that's taught in class. As someone who struggles to get their thoughts out, classes that promote open discussion, such as Ethnic Studies, are amazing. Yes, there will be discussion about race. Yes, there will be discussion about culture. Yes, there will be discussion about gender. Yes, these are conversations we need to have in order to have a more accepting and diverse nation. You want the absolute best for your students, and you have the opportunity to send us off into the world with a more open mindset. I truly believe that an Ethnic Studies class at PRHS would change the dynamic of the campus.

Thank you for hearing me out,

Kelen Macharia

--

-Kelen Macharia



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Public Comment Ethnic Studies, (Please Read Aloud)

1 message

Macharia, Kelen <8006569@pasoschools.org>
To: Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 2:39 PM

Dear respected PRJUSD Board Members,

Offering an Ethnic Studies class on campus will supply students with knowledge from the variety of cultures, races, genders, and identities represented at Paso High. We have experienced that a majority of history taught in schools stems from Europe or has been rewritten in avoidance of multicultural perspectives. Because of this, students of color on campus may not be well-versed in their own backgrounds. Given the opportunity, an Ethnic Studies class will help students feel included, proud of who they are, and celebrated in the classroom. More importantly, they will feel empowered.

ACT Club and the Black Student Union have collaborated many times over the last year and share similar values and goals. As a large group of diverse students from different backgrounds, we have consistently valued education among our members. Our passion for education has attracted the interest of over 100 students who have evolved to become more compassionate people. We harmoniously agree that Paso High would be a more empathetic, safer, and well-rounded environment if we had an Ethnic Studies course on campus. We seek a home-grown course, formed by our school, not a generic one mandated by the state of California. The CSU system, the Governor, and State Legislators have all voted towards making Ethnic Studies a required class for graduation. Providing a curriculum that was curated by local professors, teachers, and community members will resonate with Bearcats more effectively than the uniform curriculum soon required by the State.

In our clubs, we have had important, intense conversations about traditionally “taboo” topics, such as race, religion, gender, sex, sexuality, and gender identity. We have fabricated a space where students not only feel safe enough to have conversations, but become excited to learn and educate others. As club presidents, we have both been approached and thanked for leading and opening clubs like ours. We were told that for the first time, students feel accepted, celebrated, and at home. Student-led action is important, but seeing institutional change would be powerful as well. Students of Color need to feel accepted at PRHS. Having a course where their cultures can be celebrated is necessary. This is why ACT Club and the Black Student Union unify in urging you to take this step to invest in the future of student empathy at Paso High.

Sincerely supported by,

Kelen Macharia, BSU President

Cheyenne Holliday, ACT President

ACT Club and the Black Student Union

--
-Kelen Macharia



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Public comment I.8

1 message

Caitlin V <caitlin.vierra@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 6:22 PM

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Please find my attached comment for open public comment on agenda item I.8

I'm writing in regards to the ethnic studies curriculum. It was developed by the history department and reviewed by the department chairs at our very own high school. I have read through the proposed curriculum, timeline for modules and final project. It is well thought out and I wish I had been given such an opportunity when I was in school. I know that we have board members with deep reservations about this topic but it's not about the curriculum, it's about the general requirement for ethnic studies, and I hope they do the right thing for our community and put their personal opinions aside. Adopting this curriculum tonight is the right step to take to make progress in offering our students options in their education, an option the community wants. Thank you, Caitlin Vierra

IS #16



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Letter to be read at the March 23rd board meeting

1 message

Holliday, Cheyanne <8016237@pasoschools.org>

Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 10:09 PM

To: Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>

*Please read this Ethnic Studies letter of support out loud at the open session board meeting at March 23rd

Ethnic Studies Support Letter

I am a high school senior in support of the ethnic studies program. I took European History as a sophomore, and while that was interesting, it was just a deep-dive into the topics that had been briefly discussed throughout my elementary and middle school education. Ethnic studies would have been a very important course for me to have taken during my high school career because other races are not talked about enough in history classes. There are other cultures besides European, yet I feel that the education system has failed to teach me about them. I shouldn't be learning about cultural appropriation through TikTok. Students of color deserve to feel represented and an ethnic studies course would be a step in the right direction. An ethnic studies course would build empathy and understanding, two lacking emotions in society lately. I often refer to Paso High as a "mini version of the nation" but we can find ways to be kinder to each other. Knowing that our school board supports multicultural education is vital. My generation talks about our differences and accepts them, we are having difficult conversations, and we are standing up for what is right. I, among many other students, learned more about African-American culture this year because of the Black Lives Matter movement, than I have ever learned in school. How cool would it be if we could all be educated about each other's different histories and celebrate it? PRJUSD has an opportunity to create meaningful change and I fully support the approval of this course. I have a brother who is a freshman here at Paso High and I would love for him to learn more than U.S. and European history. We must learn to celebrate each other's cultures, rather than ignore them.

Sincerely,

Cheyenne Holliday

I8 # 17



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Item 1.8 approve Ethnic Studies

1 message

Dee Lacey <jdlacey1963@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 9:00 AM

To: info@pasoschools.org

To: Paso Robles Schools Board of Trustees
From: Dee Lacey

I am asking you to support the addition of Ethnic Studies to the High School Curriculum,. I know you must recognize the value of multicultural education.

This is your opportunity to add an elective that would enhance students knowledge of multicultural communities and prepare them for a multicultural world.

I think this should be an easy yes vote. You are not being asked to made this a mandatory graduation requirement. You would be offering it as an elective, so it will be a matter of choice.

I urge you to vote Yes on adding Ethic Studies to our High School curriculum

Respectfully

Dee Lacey
Former school board trustee 1976-1996

IS #18



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Ethnic Studies Elective

1 message

Katie Grainger <katiegrainger39446@gmail.com>
To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 9:23 AM

To the PRJUSD Board,

I hope you all are doing well. Thank you for considering adding an ethnic studies course as an elective.

I hope, with all of my heart, as a SLO County born and raised local, that the Board will unanimously pass this. It is crucial, not just from an education point of view, but also in terms of student safety. Why, might you ask? Parents, myself included, saw racist harassment as we began virtual learning. Some students are no longer feeling safe to go back to school. This elective is not only a way for students to feel safe, feel welcomed, feel heard, but it is an urgent need to teach a culturally diverse education.

America is a beautiful mosaic. I am better because of all the diverse cultures I have learned and embraced. Not only am I celebrating Easter with my family, but I'm also celebrating Passover with my Jewish friends, and Ramadan coming up with my Muslim friends. All of us are AMERICAN and all of us contribute to this nation and this County.

I will be listening in tonight, as will many people all across this County. America is about freedom. Freedom to choose. And America is about all of the diverse groups that make up this country. As this is being introduced merely as an elective, and not a mandated requirement, I expect this to pass unanimously without controversy.

Some benefits found nationally when adopting ethnic studies courses, Mexican American, African American and Asian American courses:

- these course offerings have helped students of color have higher graduation rates, pursue college in higher numbers, as well as get higher test scores (win win for the district and students and families).
- students who took these classes overwhelmingly support it, stating the benefits it had for them academically and socially.

In 2010, Arizona tried to outlaw ethnic studies courses. They were successful for a few years until the ban was ruled unconstitutional in 2017, and it was determined that the ban was motivated by racism.

Please don't follow in those footsteps. Currently, Paso leadership needs to do a better job ensuring the families of color are safe here and valued here. This is a start.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

From a hopeful parent,
Katie Grainger

I8 #19



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Public Comment 3/23 Agenda Item I.8

1 message

Raleigh Delk <raleighddelk@sbcglobal.net>
Reply-To: Raleigh Delk <raleighddelk@sbcglobal.net>
To: Pasoschools Info <info@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 10:39 AM

Hello, my name is Raleigh. Being born and raised on the Central Coast, I believe it absolutely necessary to approve Ethnic Studies for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.

Seeing the racism in this area first hand especially over the last year shows the need to consider the consciousness of future generations and address implicit bias and ignorance in developing brains. Mine and others' lack of education on racial dynamics and white supremacy through childhood has been undoubtedly harmful to the BIPOC community and requires personal accountability and reeducation. Real harm can be prevented by the knowledge to be gained from this course, especially through the proposed use of local speakers, as long as these speakers have a relevant lived experience to share.

Due to the importance of Ethnic Studies in educations, I believe the PRJUSD needs to go beyond making this class an elective and make it a requirement for graduation, while still considering students' lived experiences with racism to ensure mental health.

Please read during open session, thank you.

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android

IB # 20



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Comment for Tonight's Open Session

1 message

Katie Simmons <katie.simmons1007@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 10:49 AM

To: info@pasoschools.org

I would like my comment to be added to tonight's open session.

I am in favor of adding the ethnic studies course to the Paso Robles High School curriculum.

Ethnic studies courses help promote social-emotional learning and help students celebrate their diversity. These courses foster a community of pride, dignity, and mutual respect across cultures.

As a parent of three grown men who attended Paso Robles schools and a grandmother of two toddlers who will likely do the same, I believe there is a great need for this type of learning in our schools.

Thank you,

Katie Simmons
Paso Robles Resident.

I8 # 21



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

School Board Meeting Agenda Item 1.8 - Ethnic Studies

1 message

Michelle Call <ed@galacc.org>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 11:51 AM

Greetings to the School Board!

I am writing in support of agenda item 1.8 - and urge you to approve Ethnic Studies as an elective high school course.

As a representative of a marginalized group, we know how much inclusion matters. Learning about people who move through the world like us is important to self esteem and personal growth. Learning about people who move through the world in a different way than us is important to a wider understanding of our whole community, and teaches understanding and moves us toward multicultural humility.

Offering this course will equip students in Paso Robles with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the future as well as providing a rounded education that includes *all* Americans.

Please confirm Ethnic Studies as a vital and useful addition to the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District curriculum.

Sincerely,

--
Michelle Call
Executive Director
She/Her/Hers
The Gala Pride and Diversity Center



LGBTQ+ Organization in San Luis Obispo, California
Address: 1060 Palm St, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Phone: (805) 541-4252
Fax 805-545-7968

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IS # 22



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Ethnic Studies approval

1 message

Sandra Quada <squada@pasoschools.org>
To: Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>
Cc: Geoffrey Land <gdland@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 1:53 PM

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to ask for your approval of the new high school course on Ethnic Studies at PRHS. I was so excited when I heard about it! I believe this is the kind of positivity our community needs! It's this kind of awareness that our children of color need to feel a sense of belonging. When people ask, "what can I do to stop racism?... to make a difference? to support diversity? Supporting a course like this one is the type of action that can be taken. By approving this course, you bring excellence, continuous improvement and innovation to our high school. Let's practice what we preach here in this district- The mission statement is **to deliver an exemplary education in a safe environment which empowers students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in an ever-changing world.** Then this course clearly meets that goal. Please approve the Ethnic Studies course for our students.

Sincerely,

Sandra A. Quada

4th grade Bilingual Teacher
Georgia Brown Elementary School
Dual Immersion Magnet
525 36th Street
Paso Robles, CA 93447-7010
(805) 769-1200

I8 #23



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Agenda Item I.8 - Ethnic Studies

1 message

Shannon Gonzalez <shgonzal1@gmail.com>
To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 1:58 PM

Hello,

My name is Shannon Gonzalez, I'm a resident of Paso Robles and a former student of the Paso school district. I'm writing in support of the proposed ethnic studies elective for Paso Robles High School. Learning about the history, life experiences, and perspectives of people of different ethnicities can only enrich the education our Paso students receive. Ethnic studies can help students expand their worldview and become more empathetic, intelligent, and collaborative adults. Myself and other community members ask the board to approve the ethnic studies course, which will strengthen the quality of education available to students at Paso Robles High School.

IS #24



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Ethnic Studies + Closure of Georgia Brown Elementary

1 message

Kat Schroeder <katschroeder97@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:10 PM

To: info@pasoschools.org

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for the approval of ethnic studies course at Paso Robles High School and my concerns about closing Georgia Brown Elementary. I ask that this email be read during tonight's public comment portion.

Ethnic studies is essential for students to have a realistic, culturally competent view of the world. Systemic racism has left us with uncountable ways that one's access to resources, health, dignity, and more are heavily influenced by one's race and ethnicity. This has been affecting Paso Robles High School students their whole lives and will continue to affect them. Ethnic studies would acknowledge this history and teach students about the realities of the world they live in, giving them both awareness and validation of theirs and others lived experiences. To exclude ethnic studies from their curriculum would be to deny this history and would both perpetuate system inequities and invalidate the experiences of students.

~~Closing Georgia Brown Elementary school would displace students, increase school sizes, and result in job loses. This would be detrimental at any time, and during a global pandemic it is completely irresponsible. You MUST prioritize the wellbeing of the students. Find alternative ways to address the district's fiscal deficits.~~

Thank you,
Kat Schroeder Mora
Concerned Community Member



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Public Comment for Item I.8

1 message

Desire' H <desirelh@gmail.com>
To: Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:17 PM

I would like the following to be read during the board meeting this evening. For item I.8

Thank you,

Good Evening board, Let us rejoice for the day has come where I can make a happy and positive public comment and with great honor I could express my support for an ethnic studies course.

As a class of 2003 Bearcat and a founding member of the original PRHS Black Student Union, I would have eagerly signed up to take an ethnic studies class. While my teachers did their best, the curriculum was often narrow, limiting, far too often was taught through a single lens. It was not unusual for my teachers to learn something new from book reports, projects, and essays. This was because being a black child in Paso Robles the only ethnic studies I learned was taught at home and from the homes of my diverse group of friends. While learning from direct relationships is the ideal method, many students do not have the privilege of living and engaging in close proximity with those who are different from themselves.

By offering ethnic studies as an elective course this District has the ability to unlock a window to a beautifully diverse world. This class provides students with knowledge they will carry with them for life. Knowledge that translates into finding their own identities, being better allies, better advocates, better historians, and better global citizens.

Board, I ask that you seize this opportunity to discover how an ethnic studies course will teach students that there is more that unites different ethnicities than divides. This course also helps further build on the teachings from the already existing history, english and government classes.

Thank you to the students who have asked for a course like this, we see you, we hear you. Thank you to the many staff, subject matter experts, community members and parents who have worked endlessly to get to this point, we see you, we hear you. And I hope, after tonight I will get to say thank you to the board for making this a reality, we are watching you!

With gratitude, forever a bearcat, Desié Harris, class of 2003

T8 #26



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Comment for Meeting--please read during open session

1 message

Lauren Herrick <laurenhruska@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:27 PM

Hello,

I am a resident of Paso Robles and mother of two future PRUSD high schoolers. I write in support of the Ethnic Studies Course proposal.

There are many reasons to support an Ethnic Studies course in our community, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Education Committee has done an excellent job in researching and presenting them. My aim today is to offer my personal reasons for supporting the Ethnic Studies course.

When I was in public school (in Massachusetts), I learned about world cultures primarily through the lens of history: we learned about African Americans during a Civil Rights unit, Jews during a Holocaust unit, and ancient Egyptians during an Egypt unit. Cultures were condensed and contained into neat periods of history, and the implicit message was "the rest of the time, maybe 'they' don't matter so much."

I only realized that this was how I saw the world in 2014, during the Ferguson riots. Our nation was at war—in the streets, on Twitter, in the news—and I couldn't quite understand what was happening. And then I realized: the America I have always lived in is not necessarily the same America for people of other cultures and ethnicities. I realized that if I was going to wrap my head around the present day, I needed to educate myself.

I support the Ethnic Studies course because there are holes in our history books that can't be addressed by another special lesson unit or independent project. I believe we need to have a class that makes sense of our history by talking about all the cultures, the religions, the ethnicities, that have shaped our past and, thus, our present.

Please support the Ethnic Studies class; our students will be better prepared, more thoughtful, and readier to take on leadership roles when they have a solid, compassionate understanding of the complexities in our country.

Thank you very much for your time.

Lauren Herrick

I8 #27



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

3/23 School Board Mtg. Public Comment for Agenda item I.8 - to Approve Ethnic Studies

1 message

'bprince143@yahoo.com' via Information Officer <info@pasoschools.org>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:44 PM

Reply-To: "bprince143@yahoo.com" <bprince143@yahoo.com>

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

3/23 School Board Mtg. Public Comment for Agenda item I.8 - to Approve Ethnic Studies

To whom it may concern:

I graduated from Paso Robles High School in 2003. As a freshman I had the opportunity to take an elective Ethnic Studies course, taught by Mr. Cooper, and it changed my life. It was fascinating to learn about histories and narratives of communities of color, which was something vastly missing in the prominent K-12 curriculum, especially at the time. I was in 9th grade when I took this class and became inspired to go to college, a consideration I didn't have before as a first generation college student. I have used the foundation of what I learned in that one Ethnic Studies course in high school to pursue educational achievements even further. I went on minor in Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, got a Masters in Ethnic Studies from San Francisco State University, and am finishing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership at San Francisco State.

This is my hometown. As a native Paso Roblan, with nieces and nephews who are now also going to schools in Paso Robles, it is more important than ever that not only they, but all students, receive a diverse and inclusive education. Welcoming Ethnic Studies curriculum to that education is vital and much needed for our young people. I stand by and strongly support adopting Ethnic Studies curriculum at Paso Robles High School. After all, it did wonders for me.

Sincerely,

Brittany Wiley Prince

Paso Robles Alumnus, 1999-2003

IB 11-28



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Ethnic Studies Curriculum

1 message

Manuel Rendon <mrendon4@horizon.csueastbay.edu>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 2:57 PM

To: "info@pasoschools.org" <info@pasoschools.org>

Board members,

Ethnic study courses are significant to the curriculum because it teaches students about the difference in cultures, but more importantly it gives them a perspective that helps them develop critical thinking skills and an appreciation and acceptance for other cultures. It's time to give ethnic minorities the visibility they deserve. All histories need to be shared. Learning about one another's ethnicity may help create a better tomorrow. Ethnic studies belong in the curriculum. We need representation of histories we relate to.

Thank you,
Manuel José Rendon

I8 #29



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

WRITTEN COMMENT ON ITEM I.8 Approve Ethnic Studies Course at PRHS - to be read aloud at open session

1 message

Analia Cabello <analiacabello22@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 3:01 PM

Good evening everyone.

I'm Ana Lía Cabello, a Paso Robles community member, a PRHS graduate, and a graduate of Cal Poly's Ethnic Studies department, and I'm writing tonight to express my support for passing an Ethnic Studies course at PRHS.

There is an abundance of research about the benefits of taking ethnic studies classes, such as improved critical thinking skills, more academic engagement, a stronger self of self-efficacy and personal empowerment, and more, but I wanted to add some anecdotal support. On a personal level, the ethnic studies courses I took in college were the ones I remember most vividly. I can't possibly do justice to how much of an impact they have had on my life. When I was bored and frustrated with Eurocentric curriculum in other classes, ethnic studies classes welcomed me, showed me there were disciplines with broader lenses. And I loved being able to apply what I learned in my Ethnic Studies classes to concepts and theories I was learning in my other classes. I still use what I learned daily, in my job at a children's book publishing house, in my interpersonal relationships, in my consumption of media, in my interpretation of current events, and so much more. Coming into Ethnic Studies classes was a lot like getting glasses for the first time: it brought things I'd seen and noticed for years but wasn't sure how to process or name into sharp focus. And it has forever changed my perspective.

I would've loved to get the chance to take a class like this earlier in my educational career, and I hope current and future PRHS students will get that chance.

Thanks,
Analia

I8 #30



Kim Holmes <kholmes@pasoschools.org>

Tonight's Board meeting/ Ethnic Studies Comment

1 message

Niya Williams <niyahope3@gmail.com>
To: info@pasoschools.org

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 1:01 PM

Please read this during open session

My name is Niya Williams, I am a class of 2019 graduate of PRHS, and I restarted the BSU after it was inactive for around 15 years. Tonight you have the chance to shift the lives of your student in a positive direction. It would be a great disservice to those you promise to represent if you are to pass on this opportunity. Truthfully, I would have given anything to have an Ethnic Studies course available. Instances of racism were not few and far between at school for me, they were a constant. I should have found safety on the Paso Schools campuses, but instead I found ignorance and apathy. Your students of color do not feel safe and welcome on your campuses, I have heard them express this in BSU meetings and in close circles of friends. Although an Ethnic Studies course will not be a one-time fix, it begins the most important part of healing the divide that I know you see, education. It gives students of color a voice, an identity, and the history that courses on PRJUSD campuses severely lack. Ethnic Studies does not only positively impact BIPOC students, it educates and creates empathy around issues of race, gender, and class for all students. We are at a turning point as a community, as instances of racism can no longer be ignored. It is your job to ensure that you are educating your students to be empathetic, and that you are giving them the tools they need to be well rounded members of their society. Without an Ethnic Studies course you are leaving a large hole in their development as individuals, and sending them to diverse universities that they are ill equipped to study at. Even as a young black woman, I severely lacked the educational tools I needed to understand the history of inequality in our nation, and I had to navigate finding them by myself. Be the individuals to fill that gap and take a stand for your students. You have an opportunity to produce the best possible student that you can produce before you. One who is not only bright and well-rounded but empathetic and understanding. This is the beginning of a complex solution to the issues that I know you see plaguing your campuses, and I urge you to vote in favor of Ethnic Studies.