



**Board Special Meeting**  
**Work Session: Ethnic Studies**  
November 12, 2019, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.  
Auditorium, John Stanford Center  
2445 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134

## Minutes

### Call to Order

Director Burke called the work session to order at 6:37 p.m. Director Burke chaired the meeting in the absence of Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee Chair Director Geary. Directors Pinkham, Mack, Harris, and Hersey were also in attendance.

Ethnic Studies Program Manager Tracy Castro-Gill presented and other staff present were Superintendent Denise Juneau and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Diane DeBacker

### Work Session: Ethnic Studies

#### **Overview of Ethnic Studies and Community Task Force**

Ms. Castro-Gill began the presentation by providing background of the Ethnic Studies Community Task Force. She noted that the School Board directed the development of the task force which is comprised of 65 members of the community.

Director Mack asked if the task force meeting minutes are posted on the website. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that there is a webpage dedicated to the task force.

Ms. Castro-Gill touched on the interdisciplinary K-12 model.

Ms. Castro-Gill said that she helped coordinate the volunteers who co-created Black Lives Matter curriculum in the schools.

Ms. Castro-Gill explained ethnic studies is a combination of pedagogical theory and practice. She noted that ethnic studies is not multiculturalism, that ethnic studies is not just content and that it is not just a curriculum.

Ms. Castro-Gill reported that she is currently working with Laura VanDerPloeg, Manager of Professional Development Instructional Services in defining and differentiating culturally responsive teaching. She commented that ethnic studies is about changing teaching practice.

## **Ethnic Studies Logic Model**

Ms. Castro-Gill provided a flow chart to show what educators and students will be doing and what the support would look like.

Director Harris asked for examples of barriers and estimated cost of delivering required paid professional development and staff hiring. Ms. Castro-Gill responded that she does not have the cost for professional development for over 4,000 educators and the extra cost for extra time for educators. Ms. Castro-Gill shared that she does not have the capacity to do more trainings and has had to turn down requests from schools. Ms. Castro-Gill continued to share how other Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Program Managers are supported by three or four staff and that her request for five full time staff is not unreasonable.

Ms. Castro-Gill shared other barriers including school administrators not getting support and that there are no resources or no infrastructure for professional development collaboration time.

Director Mack noted her understanding of the context of the adoption process and noted confusion regarding what is being adopted.

Director Hersey shared how the Cleveland Assistant Principal has recognized the support they have received. Director Hersey asked how this can be replicated. Ms. Castro-Gill spoke to offering more moral support.

Director Hersey shared the challenges of the lack of engagement in the different communities. Ms. Castro-Gill responded that it is because of the lack of staff to support her work and explained her lack of time to maintain relationships with the community.

Ms. Castro-Gill noted that the task force has been disbanded and there is now an Ethnic Studies Work Group comprised of 25 educators.

Director Burke acknowledged the logic model and how it amplifies the student-centered outcomes.

Director Hersey shared that Federal Way School District has three evaluations. He asked how Seattle Public Schools is developing accountability for ethnic studies.

## **Initiatives**

Ms. Castro-Gill shared current initiatives including the Ethnic Studies Summer Institute and current professional development opportunities.

Director Mack asked if implicit bias training is offered in any of the professional development opportunities. Ms. Castro-Gill confirmed that there is training on implicit bias developed by the Department of Racial Equity Advancement (DREA).

Director Hersey asked if there is an opportunity for this training at the next Board retreat. Director Harris replied that there was an opportunity. However, Since Time Immemorial and Kolbe trainings are scheduled for the next retreat.

Director Pinkham asked Ms. Castro-Gill if she is collaborating with Gail Morris, the Program Manager for Native American Education. Ms. Castro-Gill confirmed that she is collaborating with Ms. Morris. Director Harris asked how principals evaluate teachers if they have not taken the training. She also asked how the Education Directors evaluate principals if they have not taken the training. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that she does not have the answer to those questions. Ms. Castro-Gill shared that there was a breakout session during one of the Leadership Learning Days, but it was cancelled due to low enrollment.

Director Hersey stated that there is a need for conversations about what accountability looks like and accountability measures.

Director Mack asked for clarification of what is being adopted. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that it was the frameworks. Ms. Castro-Gill added that the frameworks will be applied to every grade level and every topic for each area.

Director Burke stated adopting the frameworks is a long-time investment and long-term process and his expectation will also evolve over time. Director Burke commented about having a mechanism in place for approval of revisions and adjustments to the frameworks.

Ms. Castro-Gill stated that ethnic studies should not be standardized and that the frameworks allow flexibility.

Ms. Castro-Gill stated that the adoption was in a holding pattern and was awaiting the outcome of Board Policy 2015.

Ms. Castro-Gill explained that ethnic studies is not a stand-alone curriculum and not interdisciplinary. She explained that the framework would be layered on top of any curriculum.

Director Mack spoke to Board Policy 2015 and the process of adopting materials and moving forward to support instructional materials that have been adopted.

### **Scope and Sequence**

Director Harris asked how the scope and sequence is developed. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that the drafts are currently being developed by the Ethnic Studies Advisory Board and will take a year or two to complete.

Director Mack asked if the frameworks and scope and sequence come at the same time or at different times. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that it would come at different times.

### **Cross-Crediting**

Ms. Castro-Gill touched on cross-crediting.

Director Hersey commented that classes are already being taught but asked how the District is teaching these things.

Director Mack spoke to approval of the course catalog. Ms. Castro-Gill remarked that when the course description is created, it is reviewed by Kathleen Vasquez, Program Manager for Literacy and Social

Studies to ensure state standards are met. Ms. Castro-Gill noted that it would subsequently go to the Board. Ms. Castro-Gill stated that the courses are not being mandated but presented as an option to teach at the high school level.

Director Burke asked if the creation of courses for World History II, U.S. History and American Lit II would be in the course catalog. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that it depends on how they are approached by the schools.

### **Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards**

Director Harris asked how the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Ethnic Studies Workgroup is working with Seattle Public Schools. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that OSPI is looking at the District's work as a model for their ethnic studies work. Ms. Castro-Gill has shared the framework with OSPI and that a number the District's Ethnic Studies Advisory Group is involved in OSPI's committee.

Director Mack remarked that anti-bias or implicit bias, from her perspective is the starting point and that a conversation is needed to recognize bias and work towards reducing bias. Ms. Castro-Gill commented that she has had a conversation with the legal department in hopes of adopting social justice standards.

Director Burke commented that this is a powerful foundational piece. He expressed curiosity for a later time, how to unpack the intersectionality with students.

Ms. Castro-Gill commented that there are numerous standards that are not assessed. She stated that the social justice standards are not to be assessed but they are meant to guide.

Director Hersey expressed his appreciation to the students who were present at the meeting. He asked how the District is making sure that student voices are celebrated.

### **Strengths and Barriers**

Director Harris asked for an explanation of how ethnic studies supports Strategic Plan goals. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that by hiring and retaining teachers of Color, ethnic studies supports one of the goals of the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Castro-Gill shared the barriers of her work including: lack of staffing, lack of infrastructure, incomplete curriculum due to lack of staffing and lack of funding.

Superintendent Juneau commented that Dr. DeBacker is working on the funding and that the communications team is working on the website.

Director Hersey asked if there is professional development in the summer. Superintendent Juneau replied that the District leads one of the TRI days.

Ms. Castro-Gill mentioned the multi-day XITO Institute in November.

Director Burke asked what the priorities are for the different elements of ethnic studies to be able to plan for allocating resources appropriately. Director Harris asked for the timeline. Ms. Castro-Gill replied that she is working with Dr. DeBacker on a timeline.

Director Burke expressed his appreciation for Ms. Castro-Gill's work.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.