



# California Council on Teacher Education

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ETHNIC STUDIES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORIZATION/CREDENTIAL

Adopted by the CCTE Board of Directors, July 20, 2022

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During a legislative hearing in May of 2022, David DeGuire, director of the Professional Services Division at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), testified that high school teachers who are credentialed in social sciences are “sufficiently prepared to teach Ethnic Studies at the high school level.” We in the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) strongly disagree with this statement.

Research on Ethnic Studies in public schools clearly indicates that a credential in social science is not adequate preparation for teachers to teach Ethnic Studies. All California schools and districts that already require Ethnic Studies have implemented subject matter training in collaboration with local university-based Ethnic Studies departments and scholars. These school-university partnerships have taken shape in a variety of professional development arrangements, including workshops, summer training, micro-credential programs, peer coaching, and team- and co-teaching configurations. These efforts indicate that there are aspects of teaching ethnic studies that current credential and induction policy do not adequately address.

Ethnic Studies, which is mandated in California as a high school graduation requirement by 2030, is a discipline that “... is the critical study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color within and beyond the United States” (Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley). A comprehensive Ethnic Studies curriculum is interdisciplinary and draws upon multiple disciplines including history, sociology, art history, political science, communication, anthropology, and English. It is a fluid and evolving discipline which must be unpacked from an intersectional lens that examines race and ethnicity in relation to other forms of identity including gender, sexuality, immigration status, language, socioeconomic status, and religion.

We believe that the May 2022 statement from the CTC demonstrates a lack of criticality and reflects a problematic understanding of Ethnic Studies that dishonors communities of color, particularly scholars of color who have led the movement to make educational spaces more inclusive for all students, particularly BIPOC students who have been historically marginalized in schools. Asking credentialed history/social science teachers to teach Ethnic Studies is similar to asking mathematics teachers to teach economics. While there is overlap, Ethnic Studies must be treated as its own discipline.

Ethnic Studies can be understood as a counternarrative, critique, and confrontation to the traditional history and social science curriculum that students are exposed to in K-12 classrooms. Unfortunately, single subject social science and history credentialed teachers are not equipped to teach Ethnic Studies, because most are primarily trained to teach a traditional mainstream curriculum that reflects Euro-American (white) experiences and worldviews. While history/social science pedagogies encourage analysis of various events using historical thinking skills, these historical thinking skills do not emphasize criticality, discussions of institutional structures and systems of power, and understandings of identities, positionality, community, solidarity, and dis/ability which are core to Ethnic Studies. Ethnic Studies is not simply another “unit” to be covered, but has—at its base—additional fundamental pedagogies, practices, and skills distinct from current history/social science certification

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and standards (see “Towards an ethnic studies pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research,” by Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, Rita Kohli, Jocyl Sacramento, Nick Henning, Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath, & Christine Sleeter. *Urban Review*, 2015, Volume 47, pp. 104-125).

As teacher educators and researchers, we call upon the CTC to reconsider their stance that single subject social science and history teachers can teach Ethnic Studies without additional in-depth support and education. We also ask that the CTC work in partnership with Ethnic Studies scholars, the California Department of Education, County Offices of Education, school districts, teacher educators, and current K-12 teachers to make the structural changes necessary that will support a successful Ethnic Studies curriculum being taught in our schools. CTC must consider how the state can work through partnerships to build capacity for teachers who can unpack Ethnic Studies meaningfully.

Action items moving forward include:

The development of a single subject (K-12) credential in Ethnic Studies.

The development of an introductory and supplemental authorization in Ethnic Studies.

An expansion of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) that models the humanizing, culturally sustaining, and anti-racist pedagogies that are needed to ground Ethnic Studies in our classrooms.

By taking these steps, we can ensure that teachers in K-12 classrooms will be able to teach Ethnic Studies and honor our students of color, their experiences, and their histories. By continuing our own work in supporting (current and future) teachers in the teaching of Ethnic Studies (including CCTE’s Fall 2023 Conference which will center Ethnic Studies), we look forward to supporting the CTC in moving forward.