

## **Tam Unified High School District (TUHSD) Ethnic Studies (aka “Community & Consciousness” Curriculum and its Problematic Content**

1. **We are in no way against Ethnic Studies (ES).** But because this is a mandatory 9<sup>th</sup> grade class, the curriculum must be bias-free, balanced, **constructive and Inclusive** versus the “Liberated” ES version being launched this January which has **extremely politicized, one-sided and divisive** content.
2. What does an **“Inclusive” versus “Liberated”** ES version exactly mean? Please read this article by Bill Honig, Former California State Superintendent, and Chair of the California Instructional Quality Commission entitled “California schools should opt for Inclusive Ethnic Studies”. He writes:

**"Local educators, be alert. Scrutinize the ethnic studies options presented to you. Adopt an ethnic studies course and accompanied professional development that is inclusive."**

"School districts should provide **fact-based history courses** and a **robust civics education**. Ethnic studies courses should **complement** these efforts by teaching critical thinking skills that value context and objectivity and **reinforcing** our country's long-held democratic practices and ideals."

"An **inclusive** ethnic studies program is what the Legislature envisioned when it directed the State Board of Education to prepare an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum."

"Inclusive ethnic studies **programs inspire all students to embrace their own and others' cultures**, develop their individual potential, appreciate our common humanity and continue the important work of advancing America's quest for a more perfect union.

In contrast, there is a new genre of ethnic studies — “liberated” ethnic studies — marketed as “the authentic” version. With **ideological roots in the 1960s Black Power movement's neo-Marxist and liberationist and university-promoted critical theory**, “liberated” ethnic studies is part of a political movement centered on race consciousness that seems intent on alienating youth from our institutions. Presenting **non-whites as victims and whites, individually and collectively through institutions, as oppressors**, liberationists hope to create activists who will radically transform their schools, their communities and our nation.

Liberated ethnic studies proponents **sideline racial progress and focus on immutable differences**. Some dismiss individual merit, tolerance, the rule of law and compromise through reasoned discussion — values that prevent anarchy and authoritarian rule — as simply ways to maintain privilege.

Most distressingly, liberationists' emphasis on victimization narrows students' perspectives and deprives students of the agency they need to reach their fullest potential.

A few years ago this crucial choice — between an inclusive and a liberated ethnic studies — came into dramatic focus when members of the California State Board of Education and the public, supported by Gov. Gavin Newsom, sharply criticized the first California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft. Developed by liberated ethnic studies advocates, their draft was replete with liberationist principles, jargon, lessons and activities.

The Department of Education took to heart 100,000 public comments expressing concern and the State Board approved a more balanced guide.

Undeterred, **liberationists now are approaching individual school districts with curriculum framed around the same principles** that caused this commotion. Their materials are easy to spot. The reading list will often feature Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" and Tolteka Cuauhtin's "Rethinking Ethnic Studies." Their content will often emphasize "critical consciousness," "indigeneity," "hegemony," "oppression" and "decolonization."

See Honig's full article here:

<https://edsources.org/2022/california-schools-should-opt-for-inclusive-ethnic-studies/674538>

3. The TUHSD units and lesson plans available on the Community and Consciousness course has, as one Trustee stated at the 12/3 School Board meeting , "missed the mark," and is skewed toward the type of political indoctrination and Liberated Ethnic Studies curriculum that California Superintendent of Schools Honig warned against. It is unacceptable.
4. Please see the November 1, 2024 19-page letter "Parent Letter to TUHSD Superintendent & Board of Trustees" from a group of over 20 concerned parents detailing the problematic content of each unit and lesson plan. It took months for parents to see this Curriculum and only after a Public Records Act request and an appeal of the denial to provide a digital copy were parents able to review.
5. Example: Unit 3 on "Self-Empowerment for Civic Engagement" emphasizes the Black Panthers (a violent, militant group) and its anti-police and anti-America, pro-armed resistance positions and does not include on its list of Civil Rights activists heroes such as MLK, Jr. and Rosa Parks.
6. Most concerning to our community is the fact that at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the District announced at the November Board meeting they were adding 2 Units on the **Jewish American Experiences and "for balance" (their words) the Arab American Experience**. This

curriculum is undrafted with 2 weeks remaining to write it. With no time for any feedback from the community or teacher training before it's launched.