



NYU

STEINHARDT

Metropolitan Center for Research
on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

Planning Culturally Responsive Education/Ethnic Studies Campaigns

Here are some questions to think about in beginning to plan a campaign in your city or state for culturally responsive education or Ethnic Studies. For more guidance on campaign development, refer to the [organizing toolkits here](#).

Decide Where to Start

- What are the obstacles to providing a culturally responsive education or Ethnic Studies in your school district?
For example:
 - Not many teachers of color
 - Lack of teacher/ educator capacity and expertise
 - Opposition from the school district
 - Opposition from unions, elected officials, or other political forces
 - Lack of readily available culturally responsive curriculum
 - Other issues
- Which of the issues above, or others, resonate most strongly with parents, youth and community members?
- Which of the issues above, or others, have strong ally support?
- Which of the issues above, or others, do you think can be won?
- Which of the issues above, or others, need to be tackled first, in order to make progress on the other issues possible?
- Decide how you want to frame your campaign.
 - What makes the most sense given your community's history and current fights in educational justice?
 - For example, the [Ethnic Studies Now Coalition](#) in California has fought for Ethnic Studies at the high school level across numerous school districts. The [NYC Coalition for Educational Justice \(CEJ\)](#) started a campaign for culturally responsive education in core English Language Arts curriculum for students as young as Pre-K. In Seattle K-12 schools, Ethnic Studies is [integrated across content](#) areas in some, and as an elective in others.
- You can reference this [Sample Policy Demands](#) document.

Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color



- What are the racial, ethnic and gender demographics of educators in your district?
 - What is the distribution of teachers of color across schools? (i.e., are they concentrated in certain schools or parts of the district?)
 - Are they usually the only teacher of color in their school?
 - What are the demographics of principals in your district?
 - What are student demographics?
 - You can use this [Education Data Resource List](#) to support your research
- Are there any existing efforts at the district or state level to recruit, incentivize and promote teachers of color?
 - Do those efforts reflect the [research on effective strategies](#)?
 - What have been the results of those efforts?
 - What is the cost and who funds those efforts?
 - How did the effort come about? Who pushed for it and who designed it?
- Are there any existing efforts at the district or state level to [mentor, support and retain teachers of color](#) once they're in the district?
 - Do those efforts reflect the research on effective strategies?
 - What have been the results of those efforts?
 - What is the cost and who funds those efforts?
 - How did the effort come about? Who pushed for it and who designed it?

Professional Development for School Staff



- What are the racial, ethnic and gender demographics of educators in your district?
 - What is the distribution of teachers of color across schools? (i.e., are they concentrated in certain schools or parts of the district?)
 - Are they usually the only teacher of color in their school?
 - What are the demographics of principals in your district?
 - You can use this [Education Data Resource List](#) to support your research.
- What are the current district/ state requirements for professional development for teachers, principals and school staff?
 - Are there certain times of the week, or certain days during the year, when all school staff get PD?

- Who determines the content of those trainings at the school, district or state levels?
 - Do teachers have to get a certain number of professional credits over their career in order to maintain their license?
 - Are there any requirements for what types of courses must be taken?
 - What courses are currently offered in fulfillment of those credits, and by which organizations/ companies?
 - What professional development is required for principals?
- Are there any current district or state requirements for training or coursework on racial equity, diversity or culturally responsive education?
 - How did the requirement come about?
 - Who pushed for it and who designed it?
 - Are the requirements pre-service (before you become a teacher) or in-service (once you're already teaching in the classroom)?
- Are there any schools or organizations in the district that hold their own trainings for educators on those issues?
 - Is there evidence on the effectiveness/ impact of those trainings?
 - Can you observe these trainings and/ or see their curriculum?
- Who in the district is in charge of professional development?
 - Where do they stand on culturally responsive instruction?

Curriculum



- Is there any framework/ language or legislation related to culturally responsive curriculum at the district or state level?
- Have there been CRE/ Ethnic Studies efforts at the district or state level in the past?
 - How did they get started?
 - Who championed them?
 - How did they go?
 - What happened to them? (Are they ongoing?)
- What grade level and subject do you want to focus on/ start with?
 - What academic standards is that subject accountable to?
 - Do those standards include any reference to the elements of CRE?
 - Is there an exit exam in that subject/ grade that students have to take?
- Are there schools that currently use CRE or ES curriculum?
 - Is there evidence on the effectiveness/ impact of those classes?
 - How does the school prepare teachers for those classes?
 - Who leads those efforts? Can you do a school visit and talk to people who are involved?
 - Are the classes required or are they electives?

- Does your district mandate the curriculum that schools have to teach, or do principals have autonomy to choose their own curriculum?
- Does the district/ schools purchase curriculum or write their own?
- What is the process for purchasing curriculum in your district?
 - How often is new curriculum purchased?
 - What are the criteria for selecting new curriculum?
 - What curriculum vendors has the district used in the past?
 - Who has the authority to make decisions about curriculum selection?
 - Are there any opportunities for community input into curriculum selection?
- How culturally responsive is the district's current curriculum? (use the [CRC Scorecard](#) to do an assessment)

Find Your Allies



- Is there anyone at the district or state level who has been vocal about CRE or ES?
- Are there any elected officials at the city or state level that have been vocal about CRE or ES? Are there candidates who have done so?
- What positions have the teachers union and other local unions taken on issues related to CRE and ES?
- Are there community-based organizations, cultural organizations, education policy organizations, teacher advocacy groups, youth development/ activist groups or others at the district or state level that could be allies for CRE or ES?

Identify Your Targets



- Who has direct decision-making power at the district level over the issue you have chosen? Who has secondary influence over the issue?
- Who has direct decision-making power at the state level over the issue you have chosen? Who has secondary influence over the issue?
- Who has been an obstacle on moving your issue forward in the past? What kinds of pressure are they responsive to?