**TIME TO INTRODUCE ETHNIC STUDIES INTO THE LBUSD CURRICULUM**

BY ARMANDO VAZQUEZ-RAMOS, voicewaves long beach ~ MARch 18, 2015

<http://voicewaves.org/2015/03/time-to-introduce-ethnic-studies-into-the-lbusd-curriculum/#sthash.rH3BWrZP.dpuf>

As one of the most prominent school districts in the nation and ranked among the best in the world, it is time for the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to require the teaching of ethnic studies as soon as possible.

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to personally deliver at the Long Beach My Brother’s Keeper Summit the following proposal to LBUSD Board Vice President Felton Williams and Mayor Robert Garcia, and emailed the same with several supportive documents to LBUSD Superintendent Christopher Steinhauser.

After El Rancho USD adopted last summer the first local policy for such a requirement, the California-Mexico Studies Center and CSULB’s ethnic studies departments hosted the first *Campaign to Promote Ethnic Studies Summit*on October 18, 2014. One month later, the Los Angeles USD adopted a similar resolution, followed by the San Francisco USD in December and recently by the Montebello USD.



With the much touted *Long Beach Promise* collaboration between the LBUSD, L.B. City College, and CSULB, our community has a great opportunity to create a model for this purpose, and which weds our great educational institutions with community-based organizations and the City of Long Beach resources.

In addition, I’d like to propose for the LBUSD to contract with CSULB for college-credit courses to be offered to their H.S. students, based on the current model that we have created to teach an Introduction to Chicano & Latino Studies course to 35 El Rancho H.S. students on Saturdays, through our College of Continuing and Professional Education.

This is a model that I initiated last summer at Carson H.S. and that would especially serve LBUSD male students of color that need to be steered in the right direction.

The following is my humble proposal to start a dialogue with the LBUSD and all stakeholders concerned with an educational reform that is logical and direly needed, given the demographics, diversity and prominence of our school district.

**PROPOSAL TO REQUIRE THE TEACHING OF ETHNIC STUDIES IN LBUSD SCHOOLS**
Introduced by Professor Armando Vazquez-Ramos on March 5, 2015

My name is Armando Vazquez-Ramos and I am here to propose that the Long Beach My Brother’s Keeper initiative include and promote the teaching of Ethnic Studies as a requirement in the LBUSD, in collaboration with Community-based Organizations (CBO’s) and CSULB, LBCC and the LBUSD.

I firmly believe that young men of color will greatly benefit from a strong sense of identity and social responsibility, which will be derived from a profound knowledge about their history and culture.

Most importantly, college-credit Ethnic Studies courses are critically important to motivate young people to pursue higher education opportunities that are not currently in their minds.

Last October, my organization and our Ethnic Studies departments at CSULB hosted the *Campaign to Promote Ethnic Studies Summit* with over 300 activists from throughout the state that are committed to advocate for local school board policies that require Ethnic Studies in K-12, as pioneered by the El Rancho USD last summer.

Exactly a month after our CPES Summit, the LAUSD adopted a similar resolution and the San Francisco USD approved their own policy last December, with a $500,000 commitment to develop their curriculum and implement Ethnic Studies courses in the next school year.

Since then, several school boards started to consider similar local initiatives in small communities such as Berkeley and Montebello. Given the prominence of the LBUSD, our community should not stay behind.

Assemblyman Luis Alejo has re-introduced his AB-1750 legislation for a state-mandated requirement, but there’s no guarantee that it will be passed, funded or signed by the governor.

Thus, the Long Beach MBK local initiative could be the catalyst for the LBUSD to embrace this much needed educational requirement.

Respectfully submitted by,

Professor Armando Vazquez-Ramos
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