Since 1857, the National Education Association has advocated for expanded educational opportunities through public education. The Association’s core values provide the guiding spirit through which we have pursued our vision of a great public school for every student. Among those core values are:

Equal Opportunity. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A Just Society. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

NEA Core Values, NEA Handbook 2019, p.7

Guided by these values, the Association has long advocated that programs, staffing, supports, and curriculum reflect, respect, and honor the diversity, history, and cultural identities of all our students, particularly those who are under-represented in mainstream educational texts, curricula, and other educational programs. (See Attachment A for the listing of pertinent resolutions, B13-B20). One manifestation of these policies can be seen in our support for ethnic studies in K-12 and higher education settings.

The Vital Role of Ethnic Studies in Public Education

Ethnic studies is the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity, as understood through the perspectives of major underrepresented racial groups. It draws upon many disciplines to foster cross-cultural understanding -- and help students to value their own cultural identity while appreciating the differences around them. Given the proven positive social, academic, and cultural impact on all students--native students and students of color in particular--the National Education Association has been and continues to be a strong advocate for Ethnic Studies programs in early childhood, K-12 and higher education. It is key work in NEA’s imperative to advance racial justice in education.

In fact, in 2011—even before the Association passed its historic NBI B in 2015 to focus on institutional racism—NEA commissioned an academic review of the value of ethnic studies in education. This review by Christine Sleeter, as well as the leadership of our NEA Committees, Board of Directors, and many social justice leaders within our association, helped enhance both our policies and programmatic work in the area of ethnic studies.

There is considerable research evidence that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students. Curricula are designed and taught somewhat differently depending on the ethnic composition of the class or school and the subsequent experiences students bring, but Native students, students of color and White students have been found to benefit from ethnic studies.
Ethnic studies include units of study, courses, or programs that are centered on the knowledge and perspectives of an ethnic or racial group, reflecting narratives and points of view rooted in that group’s lived experiences and intellectual scholarship. Ethnic studies arose as a counter to the traditional mainstream curriculum. Numerous content analyses of textbooks have found an ongoing marginalization of scholarship by and about African Americans, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. In acknowledgement of the dominance of Euro-American perspectives in mainstream curricula, such curricula can be viewed as ‘Euro-American ethnic studies.’ As Native students and students of color proceed through the school system, research finds that the overwhelming dominance of Euro-American perspectives leads many such students to disengage from academic learning. Ethnic studies curricula exist in part because Native students and Asian, Black, Latino and Pacific Islander students have demanded an education that is relevant, meaningful, and affirming of their identities.

Ethnic studies curricula designed primarily for students who are members of the group under study are usually part of a broader effort to improve the quality of education afforded to those students, and are often used in conjunction with other dimensions such as culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers who are members of the group, and links to the community. Ethnic studies curricula are supported by research documenting a positive relationship between the racial/ethnic identity of students of color and academic achievement.

Ethnic studies curricula designed for diverse student groups that include White students, while sometimes aiming to improve student achievement, usually focus more on influencing students’ understanding of and attitudes about race and/or people who differ from themselves. Several studies, mostly with children, reveal features of curricula that make a difference. Simply infusing representation of racially and ethnically diverse people into curriculum only marginally affects students’ attitudes because racial attitudes are acquired actively rather than passively. Curricula that teach directly about racism have a stronger positive impact than curricula that portray diverse groups but ignore racism. A large body of research in higher education that examines the impact of various diversity experiences, particularly course-taking and interracial interaction, reports quite consistently that such courses have a positive impact on ‘democracy outcomes,’ particularly when they include cross-group interaction and particularly on White students, since exposure to a systematic analysis of power and cross-racial interaction is newer to White students than to students of color. Research on the academic impact of ethnic studies curricula designed for diverse student groups, while not voluminous, shows that such curricula, when designed to help students grapple with multiple perspective, produces higher levels of critical thinking.

In sum, the weight of research evidence supports the proposition that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for all students.


**NEA Resources to Help Members Take Action**
Since this review, the NEA has developed many more tools and resources to advance ethnic studies. For example, we have provided and promoted tools that our members can and have used in advancing ethnic studies curricula, including but not limited to:

- A resource area has been created on our EdJustice website for all members and allies: https://neaedjustice.org/support-ethnic-studies-programs/
• An Ethnic Studies Toolkit (http://www.ethnicstudiesnow.com/toolkit);
• A comprehensive NEA research review entitled “The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies” (http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf);
• NEA’s Africa in Antiquity Curriculum has been completed. This work is being led by a CAPE Grant in Denver with community partner Our Voice Our Schools (https://chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2020/01/27/denver-students-to-district-you-cannot-teach-american-history-without-teaching-african-american-history/).
• NEA members and affiliates have created private groups on EdCommunities (mynea360.org) devoted to issues of curriculum and instruction.

We have partnered with James Loewen, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Vermont and the author of “Lies My Teacher Told Me,” to promote the “Correct(Ed) series examining how certain eras of history are taught (https://neaedjustice.org/social-justice-issues/racial-justice/introducing-series-corrected/). Articles in the series include:

- Correct(ed): How To Teach Slavery
- Correct(ed): How To Teach Secession
- Correct(ed): The Confederacy and Race Relations
- Correct(ed): Confederate Public History
- Correct(ed): Reconstruction
- Correct(ed): How to Teach the Nadir of Race Relations
- Correct(ed): Teaching the Civil Rights Movement
- Correct(ed): Columbus the Explorer? Or Ruthless Conqueror?

NEA is currently implementing NBI 2020 – NEA will update the existing research review on the academic and social implications of Ethnic Studies and publish the results through existing NEA resources. Transformative Ethnic Studies in Schools, by the original report author, was published on February 7, 2020. NEA has preordered the book and will contact the author and publisher to purchase rights to republish one or more sections for use by our membership.

NEA has encouraged its affiliates to participate in advocacy and programs consistent with our values and policies related to ethnic studies and valuing diversity. For example, NEA promoted support for the Black Lives Matters at Schools campaign (BLM@Schools Campaign). In encouraging our affiliates to participate in the campaign, NEA sent the following to state affiliates:

“OPPORTUNITY: Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action is fast approaching! From February 3-7, educators, students and allies across the country are taking action in their schools and communities around the key priorities that benefit all students and public schools. The Black Lives Matter at School movement asks educators to mobilize for racial justice in education and address the continuing inequities that lead to institutionally racist policies and practices in schools. This year’s Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action is centered around 4 key priorities: 1. Ending “zero tolerance” discipline and implementing restorative justice practices, 2. Hiring more black teachers, 3. Mandating black history and ethnic studies, and 4. Funding more counselors than police officers in schools. Resources: NEA will be hosting a Facebook Live event on Tuesday, January 28. Join NEA Vice President Becky Pringle and Zakiya Sankara-Jabar, National Field Directory of Dignity in Schools Campaign, for a discussion about the key principles of Black Lives Matter at School Week and how educators are getting involved.”
Finally, NEA has developed template-based resources to support interested parties, including NEA affiliates and partner stakeholders, to develop and implement issue-based campaigns. These campaigns include the establishment of ethnic studies programs. Below are links to important resources that NEA members and affiliates can use when developing an integrated organizing campaign:

- Organizing Model & Template for Integrated Issue-Based Comprehensive Campaigns
- Campaign Planning Template
- Identify Priorities & Build Organizing Capacity at the Local Level

These organizing templates help affiliates establish campaign plans that fit the unique work of uplifting and amplifying educator voices to achieve concrete wins for students, communities, and public education as a whole.

This is certainly not the sum total of all the resources we have ever produced, but it provides a snapshot of the ways in which the organization has provided tools to members and affiliates.

Members and Affiliates Leading the Work
When NEA created the Social Justice Activist of the Year Award, the first winner was Jose Lara, who won the award for his leadership in advancing ethnic studies. [http://neatoday.org/2015/07/27/how-one-educator-is-taking-ethnic-studies-mainstream/](http://neatoday.org/2015/07/27/how-one-educator-is-taking-ethnic-studies-mainstream/)

We have lifted up many other examples on NEA properties to inspire others to follow the leadership of our members and allies. Such examples include:

- Community Campaign Key To Passage Of Bill Requiring Ethnic Studies Curriculum In CT High Schools ([https://neaedjustice.org/2019/08/05/community-campaign-key-to-passage-of-bill-requiring-ethnic-studies-curriculum-in-ct-high-schools/](https://neaedjustice.org/2019/08/05/community-campaign-key-to-passage-of-bill-requiring-ethnic-studies-curriculum-in-ct-high-schools/))
- Educator Activism Makes the Promise of Ethnic Studies Policy a Reality ([https://neaedjustice.org/support-ethnic-studies-programs/](https://neaedjustice.org/support-ethnic-studies-programs/))
- Students, Educators Mobilize in Support of Ethnic Studies Programs ([https://neaedjustice.org/support-ethnic-studies-programs/](https://neaedjustice.org/support-ethnic-studies-programs/))

Communications Work
NEA has a story slated on ethnic studies for the June 2020 *NEA Today*. We have done features on the issue almost every year either free standing or as a part of Black Lives Matter at school activism. This content is always actively promoted on social media. Examples of articles include:

- [http://neatoday.org/2019/02/04/black-lives-matter-at-school/](http://neatoday.org/2019/02/04/black-lives-matter-at-school/)

Examples of social media posts include:

- [https://twitter.com/Lily_NEA/status/1087013670960406528](https://twitter.com/Lily_NEA/status/1087013670960406528)
- [https://twitter.com/Lily_NEA/status/1088208257586511873](https://twitter.com/Lily_NEA/status/1088208257586511873)
- [https://twitter.com/NEAToday/status/109143599058755585](https://twitter.com/NEAToday/status/109143599058755585)
NEA members and affiliates—through the help of association tools and resources—are poised to expand ethnic studies in public education. The inclusion of the central tenets of ethnic studies in all curriculum as well as ethnic studies courses into public education is not only beneficial to students, it ultimately is a critical lynchpin in our effort to achieve racial justice in education and to create a more just society.

And, as we continue on our fundamentally critical racial justice journey, we dedicate ourselves to put in place mechanisms for continuous learning in this area for the benefit of our students, members, and communities.
B-13. Diversity
The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among race, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society. Education should foster a vibrant, pluralistic society that authentically reflects diverse populations and cultural perspectives.

The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs, and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of diverse groups and individuals. The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2015)

B-14. Racial Diversity Within Student Populations
The National Education Association believes that a racially diverse student population is essential for all elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to promote racial equality, improve academic performance, and foster a robust exchange of ideas. The Association also believes that a racially diverse student population may not be achieved or maintained in all cases simply by ending discriminatory practices and treating all students equally regardless of race. Strategies should be encouraged to enhance equity in the education of our students.

The Association further believes that, to achieve or maintain racial diversity, it may be necessary for elementary/secondary schools, colleges, and universities to take race into account in making decisions as to student admissions, assignments, and/or transfers. (1999, 2015)

B-15. Racism, Sexism, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity Discrimination
The National Education Association believes in the equality of all individuals. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion must be eliminated. The Association also believes that plans, activities, and programs for education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such plans, activities, and programs must—
  a. Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender persons, and people with disabilities
  b. Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.
  c. Foster the dissemination and use of nondiscriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities
  d. Eliminate institutional discrimination
  e. Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups that have been underrepresented historically
  f. Identify how prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination have limited the roles and contributions of individuals and groups, and how these limitations have challenged and continue to challenge our society
  g. Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, or religion
h. Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees
i. Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools
j. Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups
k. Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters. (1996, 2015)

B-16. American Indian/Alaska Native Education
The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of American Indian/Alaska Native children require the direct involvement of parents/guardians, Native educators, tribal leaders, and other Native groups in developing programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures. The Association believes that funding for American Indian/Alaska Native education must provide for improvements.

The Association supports the movement toward self-determination by American Indians/Alaska Natives provided that such programs are voluntary. Any termination of federal support as either a direct or an indirect result of efforts to extend self-determination is opposed.

The Association also believes in efforts that provide for—

a. Involvement and control of the education of American Indian/Alaska Native students by their parents/guardians, communities, and educators
b. Opportunities for higher education for all American Indian/Alaska Native students through direct governmental assistance in graduate and undergraduate programs
c. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in lobbying efforts for federal programs
d. Protection and maintenance of the integrity of American Indian/Alaska Native families and their tribal cultures so that, if a child has to be removed from his or her home, placement should be determined by the child’s tribe
e. Recognition of American Indian/Alaska Native educators as role models
f. Involvement of American Indians/Alaska Natives in professional development programs dealing with cultural pluralism and Native values
g. American Indian/Alaska Native involvement in developing multicultural learning centers at higher education institutions
h. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
i. Instruction in treaty rights and traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices by American Indians/Alaska Natives
j. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students
k. Coordination with American Indian/Alaska Native organizations and concerned agencies that promote the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indian/Alaska Native peoples
l. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of American Indians/Alaska Natives
m. Control of Native lands by American Indians/Alaska Natives
n. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.

(1976, 2011)

B-17. Hispanic Education
The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Hispanic children require the direct involvement of Hispanic educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in developing programs that meet the cultural, language, and learning characteristics of these children. The Association believes in efforts that provide for—

a. Programs establishing appropriate educational opportunities for Hispanic students
b. Grants and scholarships for higher education that will facilitate the recruitment, entry, and retention of Hispanics
c. Recognition of Hispanic educators as role models
d. Hiring, promotion, and retention of Hispanic educators at all levels of the education profession
e. Recruitment, training, employment, and retention of bilingual, bicultural, and culturally competent teachers, counselors, and other professional and support staff to meet the needs of Hispanic students
f. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language and cultural needs of Hispanic students
g. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Hispanics
h. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of Hispanic students
i. English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the needs of Hispanic students
j. Involvement of Hispanics in lobbying efforts for federal programs
k. Involvement of Hispanic educators in developing educational materials used in classroom instruction
l. Coordination with Hispanic organizations and concerned agencies that promote the values, language, culture, and history of Hispanics
m. Involvement of Hispanics in professional development programs dealing with cultural pluralism and Hispanic values
n. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through overrepresentation in special education programs and underrepresentation in gifted programs
o. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through overrepresentation and/or underrepresentation in charter schools
p. Programs that address the alarming dropout rates of male students and the disproportionate teen pregnancy rate of Hispanic female students and encourage continuing education
q. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.

The responsibility for developing and implementing programs for Hispanic children should be realized by state and local agencies, regardless of the availability of federal funds. (1972, 2013)

B-18. Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Education
The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander children require the direct involvement of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in the development of programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures. The Association believes in efforts that provide for the—

a. Preservice and continuing education of teachers
b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students
c. Education of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander adult refugees
d. Dissemination of programs and information that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders
e. Recognition of Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander educators as role models
f. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Asian and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander heritage and culture. (1979, 2011)

B-19. Micronesian Education
The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Micronesian children require the direct involvement of Micronesian island educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in the development of programs that meet the cultural, language, and learning characteristics of these children. The Association believes in efforts that provide for—
   a. Programs establishing appropriate educational opportunities for Micronesian students
   b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Micronesian students
   c. Development of relationship-building and culturally cohesive frameworks designed to meet the needs of Micronesians in the school, home, and work environment
   d. The recruitment, training, and employment of Micronesian island educators as role models, bilingual teachers, counselors, and other professional and support staff to meet the needs of Micronesian students
   e. Involvement of Micronesian educators in developing educational materials for classroom instruction, as well as the dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Micronesians
   f. Assistance to affiliates in meeting the educational needs of Micronesian students
   g. Opportunities for higher education for all Micronesian students through direct and indirect governmental assistance in graduate and undergraduate programs
   h. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Micronesian heritage and culture. (2008, 2011)

B-20. Black American Education
The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Black American children require the direct involvement of Black American educators, parents/guardians, community leaders, and groups to assure the development of adequate and equal educational programs. The Association believes that the infusion of Black studies and/or Afrocentric curricula into the instructional program acknowledges the contributions of African Americans to history and Africa as an integral part of world history. The Association also believes that these curricula must show a correlation among social, historical, political, and economic developments and events regarding Africa, African-Americans, Europeans, and their descendants worldwide.
The Association further believes in efforts that provide for—
a. The preservation of Black heritage and culture
b. Funding of scholarships to facilitate the entry of Black students into the teaching profession
c. Recognition of Black educators as role models
d. Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of Black educators, especially Black males at all levels of the education profession
e. Involvement of Black educators in developing educational materials used in classroom instruction
f. English proficiency programs in the regular instructional process for those Black students experiencing difficulty with standard English
g. Programs that address the alarming dropout rate among Black male students and the disproportionate teen pregnancy rate among Black female students and encourage continued education, thereby increasing their participation in the work force
h. Development of athletic programs that promote educational excellence, not just athletic power
i. Opposition to the resegregation of the public schools through special classes, or through overrepresentation in special education programs and underrepresentation in gifted programs
j. Opposition to the resegregation of public schools through overrepresentation and/or underrepresentation in charter schools
k. Dissemination of information and programs that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Black Americans
l. Protection of undergraduate and graduate ethnic studies programs at universities and community colleges, and course offerings at the high school level.

(1981, 2011)