

Critical Ethnic Studies: Divisive and Traumatizing

Legislators passed SSB 5023 (2019) and SB 6066 (2020) directing the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop learning requirements that identify the “knowledge and skills that all public school students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures.”

The citizens of Washington expected a curriculum celebrating other cultures but received a divisive and inflammatory curriculum which omits vital information, in order to promote a viewpoint and promotes activism over scholarly inquiry.

Described as “Critical” or “Liberatory,” Ethnic Studies ignores the history of mankind and promotes the idea that only native and Third World peoples were “colonized.” It presents a one-sided and historically inaccurate picture: that Europeans came to spread disease, pillage and plunder peaceful indigenous cultures. Critical Ethnic Studies seeks to “decolonize” the curriculum including history, literature, science and math, as well as the faculty.

- **It focuses on ancestral oppression**, not the post Civil Rights era in which students live.
- **It rejects a meritorious academic curriculum** that teaches the skills necessary to live in a globalized economy, repeatedly referencing “decolonizing the curriculum.”
- **It promotes a Marxist analysis of society** where people are categorized as being oppressors or oppressed.
- **It violates the Civil Rights Act:** Every student has the right to a learning environment that is free from discrimination: under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations (Title VI) to provide all students a school environment free from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.
- **It falls outside the scope granted by the legislature** by including concepts and identifying goals and responsibilities not granted under RCW 28A.300.112.
- **It violates the WA State Constitution:** "Section 4 of Article IX provides, “All schools maintained or supported wholly or in part by the public funds shall be forever free from sectarian control or influence.” Education requires students be exposed to multiple sides of an issue, not only to a narrow, partisan view.

However, there is a solution:

1. ***Oppose legislation that promotes “critical” studies, decolonization, and student-directed learning over state and local learning standards that promote academic goals.***
2. ***Replace the OSPI promoted Critical Ethnic Studies reflecting Critical Race Theory with a constructive curriculum such as ACES (www.calethstudies.org) which works to “bring students together in understanding our shared humanity, focusing on how unity can flow out of our diversity.”***

