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?

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**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?