

Advancing Ethnic Studies in California High Schools

A Survey of Teacher Preparation Programs

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Veronica Terriquez, Director of UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center; Professor of Urban Planning and Chicana/o and Central American Studies

Albert Camarillo, Professor of History, Emeritus, Stanford University

To ensure California's future educators are prepared to teach in the state's diverse schools, some higher education institutions have begun integrating Ethnic Studies into their teacher training programs. These efforts partly respond to Assembly Bill 101, signed into law in 2021, which requires all California high school students to complete a one-semester Ethnic Studies course to graduate, starting with the class of 2030. Ethnic Studies is also expanding at other educational levels.

While this mandate offers a valuable opportunity to enrich curriculum and prepare students for civic and professional life in a multiracial society, many schools remain ill-prepared to implement it, particularly given the lack of dedicated funding. Challenges include limited access to quality curriculum and a pressing need for trained teachers. This brief report—produced through a collaboration between Stanford University's Institute for Advancing Just Societies and Center for Comparative Studies in Race & Ethnicity, and UCLA's Institute of American Cultures Ethnic Studies research centers and Center X in the School of Education & Information Studies—draws on survey data from institutions working to address these gaps in Ethnic Studies teacher preparation.

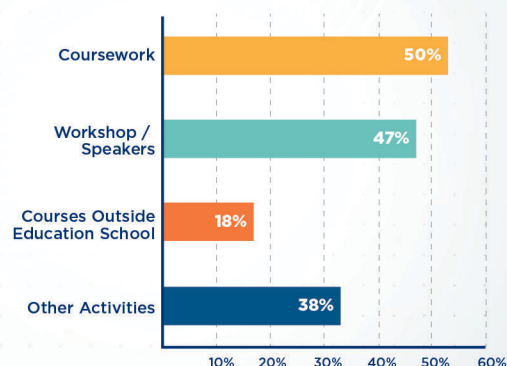


Approximately 3 out of 4 education schools offer K-12 Ethnic Studies-related training

This survey was conducted in late 2024 and the first half of 2025, with responses from 34 institutions: 6 University of California (UC) campuses, 11 California State Universities (CSUs), and 17 private institutions. At the time of the survey, which was completed by deans or other institutional leaders, approximately 3 of 4 (77 percent) of schools offer some level of training aimed at preparing teachers to teach Ethnic Studies.

Survey results further illustrate how these institutions are equipping teacher candidates to teach K-12 Ethnic Studies, though instruction remains uneven. Half (50 percent) provide dedicated coursework focused on Ethnic Studies instruction, while 47 percent offer workshops, speaker series, or other supplemental learning opportunities.

Training Strategies for K-12 Ethnic Studies Instruction



Source: Survey of Deans and Teaching Programs at Schools of Education (N=34, 46% response rate)

Additionally, 18 percent encourage candidates to take relevant courses outside their schools of education, and 38 percent engage in activities such as placing student teachers in Ethnic Studies classrooms, incorporating Ethnic Studies materials into existing courses, or facilitating reading circles to expose candidates to foundational texts and discussions.

Regarding instructional staffing, 35 percent of institutions reported having dedicated faculty who teach Ethnic Studies-related coursework. Another 12 percent draw on faculty from Ethnic Studies or other departments, while an additional 6 percent rely on professional staff, lecturers, or in-service instructors. Some institutions did not provide responses to this question.



**Nearly 2 out of 3 education schools
collaborate with K-12 institutions**

Notably, 64 percent of surveyed institutions reported collaborating with K-12 districts or schools on Ethnic Studies curriculum development or professional development initiatives. Most of these efforts focus on high schools, with 56 percent of institutions involved at this level. Additionally, 41 percent reported initiatives targeting middle schools, and 29 percent are engaged in similar efforts at the elementary school level.

The training and coursework partially covers the four major groups: 62 percent include materials on Latina/o/x communities; 59 percent on African Americans/Blacks; 56 percent on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; and 56 percent on Native Americans. Of the institutions surveyed, 31 percent make publicly available curriculum or other related resources.

Finally, all participating institutions expressed interest in attending a convening to exchange resources and strategies for supporting the effective implementation of K-12 Ethnic Studies.

In summary, while many higher education institutions have taken steps to prepare future teachers for Ethnic Studies instruction, there remain opportunities to strengthen training, expand content coverage, and deepen collaboration with K-12 schools across grade levels.

Veronica Terriquez, Director, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, and **Albert Camarillo**, Professor of History, Emeritus, Stanford University, co-coordinated the survey with the assistance of César Oyervides-Cisneros, Senior Administrator of Campus Initiatives, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, and Rita Kamani-Renedo, PhD candidate, Stanford Graduate School of Education.