



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 9, 2024

CONTACT: Andrew Shortall

(909) 204-6013

Fontana Unified Expands Graduation Requirements with Yearlong Ethnic Studies Course, Beginning with Class of 2029

FONTANA, CA – In an effort to promote cultural awareness and understanding, Fontana Unified School District’s Board of Education, during its Oct. 2 meeting, unanimously approved making a standalone, yearlong ethnic studies course a graduation requirement for high school students beginning with the Class of 2028-29.

In 2021, California became the first state to require all students to pass a semester-long ethnic studies course to earn a high school diploma starting with the Class of 2029-30. Fontana Unified went above and beyond the state’s directive to make its ethnic studies requirement a standalone, yearlong course starting with next year’s freshmen class.

“The curriculum of ethnic studies will highlight marginalized voices and perspectives, giving students the opportunity to learn about and advocate for underrepresented communities,” Board Member Dr. Jennifer Quezada said before the vote. “I also believe ethnic studies and having it yearlong will be able to create students who are informed, empathetic, and engaged citizens who are better prepared to navigate and contribute to a diverse society.”

The [California School Boards Association](#) has cited research showing that ethnic studies improves student outcomes, critical thinking, self-esteem, and student engagement and can also reduce dropout rates and improve student achievement.

Fontana Unified students have had access to an A-G-approved ethnic studies course since 2019-20 after the Board approved a 2018 resolution to create a course and establish an Ethnic Studies Committee in the District.

In the adopted revision, the FUSD Board made both ethnic studies and a semester-long personal finance course graduation requirements, with the finance course requirement starting with the Class of 2030-31. It was passed with a 6-0 vote that included Student Board Member Adriana-Rene Humber.

“I think that learning about our history and the culture of other students will help us be more unified, understand each other better, and connect better as students,” Humber said before the vote. “I think when we do that, we are going to be more unified as a community and as a school District.”

Before the vote, several community members, including Fontana Teachers Association President Mark Schulte, expressed support for making ethnic studies a graduation requirement in the District.

It continues a series of actions taken by Fontana Unified's Board in its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. On Sept. 4, the Board unanimously voted to rename Randall Pepper Elementary School to O'Day Short Elementary. Southridge Tech Middle School seventh grader Cyrus Moss petitioned the Board to take action to honor the O'Day Short Family, which is remembered for breaking Fontana's color barrier in 1945.

"We strive to prepare our students for a global society here in Fontana Unified, and requiring a yearlong ethnic studies course for graduation fits right into that goal perfectly," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "This will provide our students with the chance to explore diverse histories of both our country and our community of Fontana as they develop empathy and draw inspiration to be the best versions of themselves along the way."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_GRADS1: A.B. Miller High School students celebrate their graduation during commencement on May 23. The Fontana Unified Board of Education made ethnic studies a graduation requirement for its students starting with the Class of 2029 during its Oct. 2 meeting.

FUSD_GRADS2: A Jurupa Hills High School student celebrates his graduation during a May 22 ceremony. Starting in 2028-29, Fontana Unified students will need to complete a standalone, yearlong ethnic studies course to obtain a high school diploma.

###