



CONTACT

Communications Team, GENUp
EMAIL: info@generationup.net
WEB: generationup.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ethnic Studies Mandate Signed Into Law

Press release

Sacramento, California, October 8, 2021 — Today, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill 101 (AB101), a bill which will require high schools to provide ethnic studies to all California students, starting in the academic year 2025-2026. As a proud principal co-sponsor of AB101, Generation Up (GENUp) celebrates this action taken by the governor, which will ensure that the history of BIPOC communities are more fully included and represented in our classrooms. The implementation and enforcement of these standards is a monumental achievement for California, which boasts one of the most diverse student populations in the United States.

This development comes on the heels of decades of advocacy efforts by grassroots campaigns to make ethnic studies a reality, stretching back to the 1960s with the [Third World Liberation Front's](#) protests that started at San Francisco State. Last year, spearheading a coalition of youth-led social justice organizations, GENUp [mobilized thousands](#) of students all over California to push an ethnic studies mandate through our state legislature. On September 9, 2021, GENUp hosted an [in-person rally](#) at the State Capitol to use our voices in advocating for Ethnic Studies. Along with Fred T. Korematsu Institute director Dr. Karen Korematsu, AB101 author Jose Medina, and prominent student activists, we voiced our organization's passionate support and personal experiences on the need to have our histories taught in classrooms.

Ethnic Studies allows students of color to find representation in their education and reflect on their experiences, improving their self-esteem and comfort levels in their school and community. As students are exploring their own cultural identities, the expectation for them to develop firm understandings of who they are when they graduate is not plausible without a school curriculum that reflects a diverse study of race and ethnicity. A recent [Stanford study](#) illustrates this need for culturally competent curricula, as it found the implementation of Ethnic Studies in a high school setting led to increased academic engagement, achievement, and personal empowerment, which improved GPAs and the completion of graduation credits among students of color. AB101 will help close the achievement gap by reducing student truancy and increasing student engagement, reducing drop-out rates, and better prepare Californian youth to be college prepared and career ready.

GENUp applauds Governor Newsom's actions regarding AB101, but the fight is far from over. It is our organization's strong belief that without student activism and voice, this bill would not have gotten as far as it went. We encourage all education stakeholders to hold their districts accountable in properly implementing this curriculum, so that a future California and a future America, replete with education about the backgrounds of all members of the diverse society of the United States, may be realized.

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