

BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

PROJECT SUMMARY FROM 2022 TO 2024



February 2025



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IN APPRECIATION

PON is grateful to its community partners for their collaboration and support of the project: The National Association of African American Parents & Youth (NAAAPY), the Loken Foundation, and Para Los Niños. In addition, the project benefited from the contributions of project consultants, Dr. Corina Espinoza and Toni Tinker-Loken, and Dr. Joyce Watts in her role as Co-Chair of the PON Advisory Board.

We are grateful to Dr. Corina Espinoza as the primary author of this brief. Contributions were also made by Araceli Simeón, Toni Tinker-Loken, Joyce G. Watts, and Yolande Beckles.



PARENT LEADERS

Almost 70 Black and Latino parents participated in the project in 2024.

FUNDERS

Funding for this project and publication was provided through the generous support of The California Endowment.



College



LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear members and partners:

The Parent Organization Network's (PON) mission is to unite the power of underserved parents to break through barriers in public education, so parents and educators can effectively partner to ensure equity and excellence for all students.

The overarching premise of the Parent Organization Network (PON) is strength through diversity. This concept drives the organization's priorities and efforts to design and implement programs that strengthen parents' ability to guide and support their children's development in a multilingual and multicultural society.

In this report we share strategies that helped us foster a safe environment for parents and community leaders from different backgrounds to learn and engage with each other, and we offer key takeaways from the project, thus far.

Given the polarized environment and the intentional efforts to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, it is now more important than ever to remain committed to efforts that will raise critical awareness that caring only about one's own children perpetuates self-centeredness and undermines our interconnectedness and true transformation toward unity and justice.

I look forward to your ongoing partnership in efforts to continue bridge-building and network-weaving across diverse communities and organizations so we overcome this moment and emerge stronger than before.

In solidarity,



Araceli Simeón

PON Executive Director



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

PON has a deep commitment to the growth and potential of parent engagement in children’s education. Current data around student academic achievement, regrettably, shows that disparities continue. There is a sense of urgency to improve academic outcomes by providing high-quality, inclusive, and equitable educational experiences for all students and authentically engaging their families as partners in this process. This urgency is heightened by recent social and political circumstances that cast greater light on relationships among historically marginalized communities, specifically the Black and Latino communities. These incidents occurred at the local, state, and national levels, and included such events as the murder of George Floyd, persistent racial profiling by law enforcement, and the LA City Council scandal where racist and disparaging remarks about Black and Indigenous communities were made. Politics at the national level is also contributing to the divisiveness and antagonism that is expressed within households, between communities, and even on school campuses.

As a result of the current political context, PON dedicated time and resources to develop the Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity project. The goal of the project is to empower parents to work together in supporting their middle and high school children’s academic success. Supporting a high school student can be challenging and confusing for parents. The program focused on understanding the newly designated Ethnic Studies high school graduation requirement through synchronous sessions for parents from the two self-identified affinity groups: African American and Latino.

As a multi-generational program for families and community members, the project seeks to empower parents to make a meaningful impact on their child’s education and community by leveraging the ethnic studies requirement to build parent awareness and understanding of Ethnic Studies graduation requirement. The overall goal was to build parent capacity and agency and boost parent and student engagement, while promoting cross-cultural solidarity.

Of particular significance with the Ethnic Studies requirement as a framework is that the state of California requires Ethnic Studies courses be offered in high schools, yet there are no set of prescribed courses that all students must pass to receive a high school diploma (CDE, 2023). The California Department of Education (CDE) has statutory requirements, guidelines for implementation, and instructional resources for districts and schools, as well as a model curriculum. However, the process of implementing the new requirement – or how to -- will vary by school district and individual schools. This flexibility will allow local administrators and teachers to develop Ethnic Studies courses based on their school’s community and capacity. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ethnicguidelines.asp>) For example, some schools may choose to schedule a course for one semester or two or offer courses starting at a specific grade level. This can be a challenge for PON because our participants reside in multiple districts across Los Angeles County.

A vital element of the development and implementation of this new requirement will entail that schools engage parents and families in the process by consistently keeping parents informed through notification that is “written in language that is inclusive and supportive of multiple users ... and the community” (CDE, 2021).

Project Rationale: Why this program?

Improving student academic achievement has been a consistent priority in education in California. The dedication of teachers, counselors, principals, and other educators is to be commended. Yet, student outcomes are not reflective of these efforts. Students, in particular Black and Latino and other student groups, continue to fall short of high academic achievement.

Student Outcomes

Data from the annual statewide Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) exam is used to measure the levels of proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. In 2024, 47% of ALL students in California were proficient in ELA and 36% of students were proficient in mathematics. Although there is a tendency to attribute low performance to the effects of the pandemic, a comparison of data from 2019 reveals that pre-COVID proficiency for all students was only 4% higher than current levels – 51% in ELA and 40% in math. Major work is needed to have ALL California students achieve their highest potential.

When the data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, a different scenario emerges – one that highlights persistent disparities and underachievement by students of color, particularly those who are Black and Latino, as well as English Learner students.

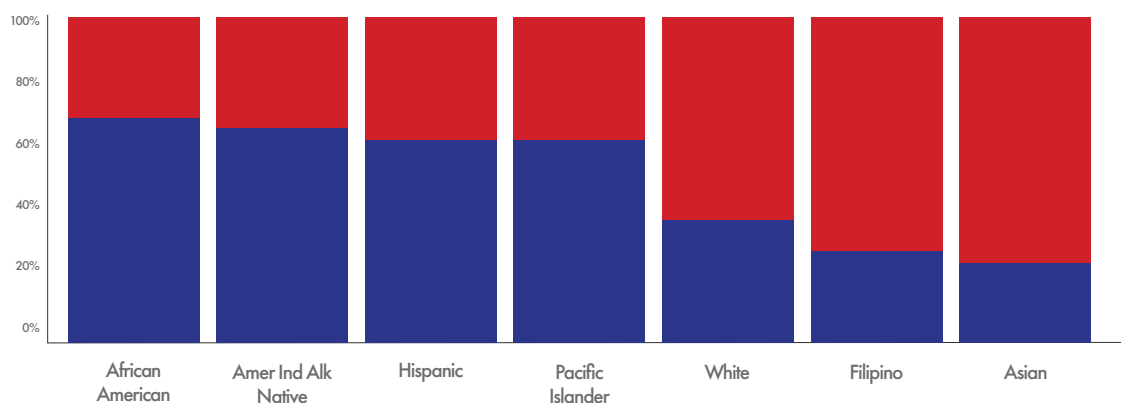
In 2024, 36% of Latino students were proficient in ELA, while 64% were not. Only 30% of African American students were proficient in ELA, while 70% were not. These disparities are glaring. In math, the scenario is the same, regrettably. 24% of Latino students were proficient, yet 76% were not. Unfortunately, the scenario can get worse. Only 18% of African American students achieved proficiency in math, 82% did not. These two student groups are not failing; the school system is failing them.

2024 Test Results by Race and Ethnicity

Two achievement levels

Standard Not Met or Nearly Met Standard Met or Exceed

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS RESULTS



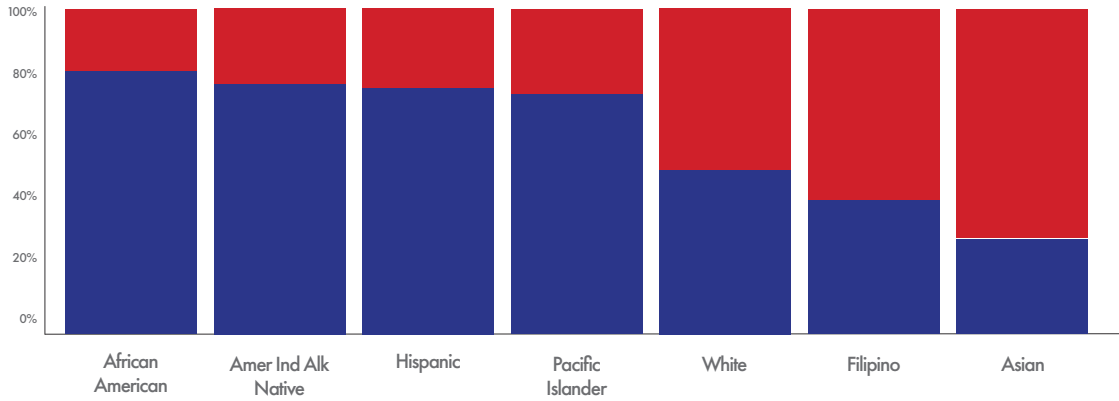
SOURCE: [HTTPS://CAASPP.EDSOURCE.ORG/SBAC/CALIFORNIA-](https://caaspp.edsource.org/sbac/california-)

2024 Test Results by Race and Ethnicity

Two achievement levels

Standard Not Met or Nearly Met Standard Met or Exceed

MATH RESULTS

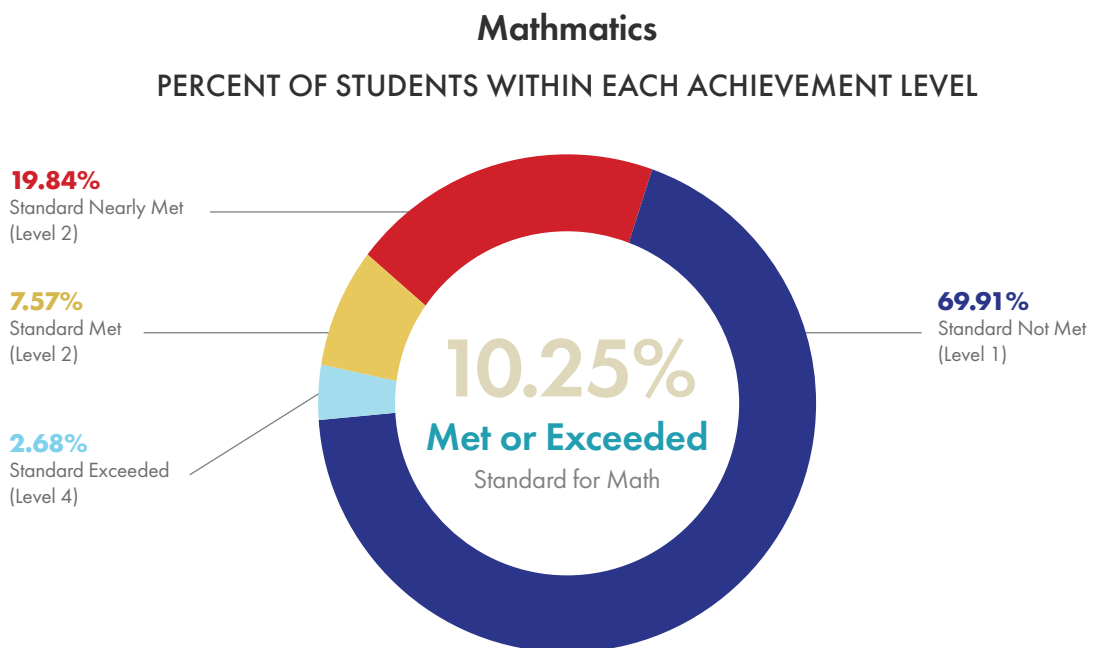
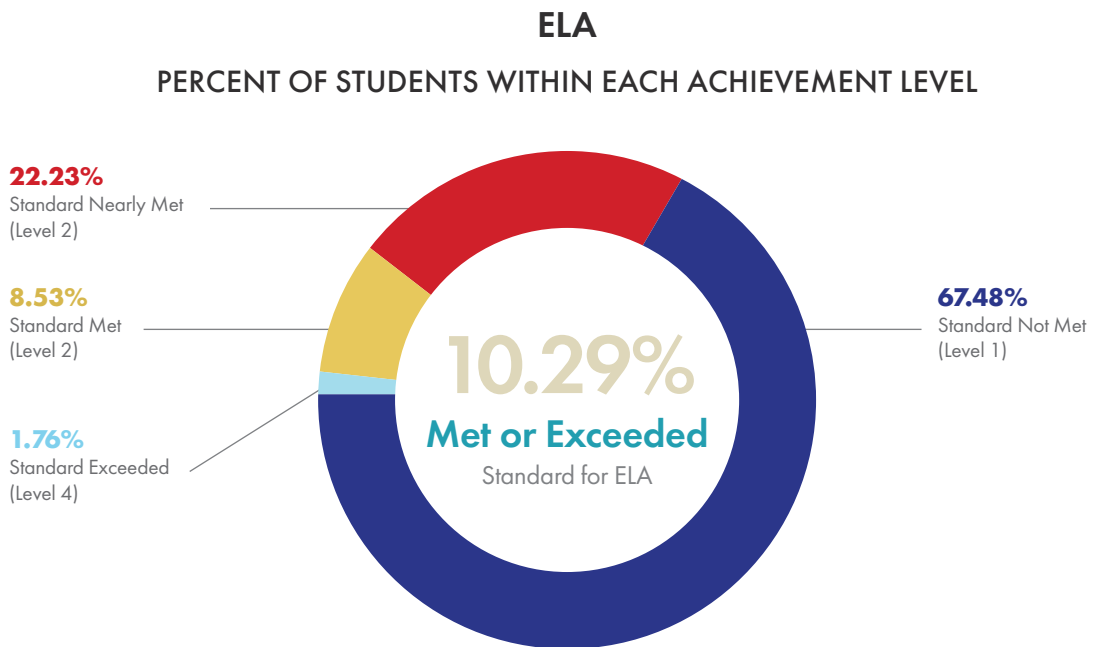


Race/Ethnicity	English: Standard Not Met	English: Standard Nearly Met	English: Standard Met	English: Standard Exceeded
White	20.05%	19.71%	30.63%	29.61%
Hispanic	38.72%	24.5%	24.08%	12.7%
African-American	46.81%	22.85%	20.03%	10.31%
Asian	12.71%	13.05%	27.77%	46.48%
Pacific Islander	37.13%	25.11%	24.43%	13.33%
Filipino	11.92%	17.25%	33.4%	37.44%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	43.11%	23.59%	21.47%	11.83%

Race/Ethnicity	Math: Standard Not Met	Math: Standard Nearly Met	Math: Standard Met	Math: Standard Exceeded
White	26.05%	24.38%	23.46%	26.11%
Hispanic	50.73%	25.54%	14.87%	8.86%
African-American	59.83%	22.42%	11.46%	6.29%
Asian	14.37%	15.65%	20.9%	49.08%
Pacific Islander	48.13%	26.52%	15.42%	9.93%
Filipino	19.21%	23.28%	25.98%	31.54%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	54.43%	23.07%	13.38%	9.12%

SOURCE: [HTTPS://CAASPP.EDSOURCE.ORG/SBAC/CALIFORNIA-](https://caaspp.edsource.org/sbac/california-)

In 2024, 10% of California’s English Learners were proficient in both ELA and math; however, 90% were not.



IN 2024, 10% OF CALIFORNIA’S ENGLISH LEARNERS WERE PROFICIENT IN BOTH ELA AND MATH; HOWEVER, 90% WERE NOT.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://CAASPP-ELPAC.ETS.ORG](https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org)



SCHOOLING SYSTEM: WHY ETHNIC STUDIES?

In October 2021, the California State Assembly passed Assembly Bill 101 which requires all high school students to complete a course in ethnic studies to graduate, starting in the 2025-26 school year for the graduating class of 2029 – 2030. The bill made California the first state in the United States to require Ethnic Studies as a high school graduation requirement. While there has been resistance to implementing the requirement, many school districts in California have already implemented Ethnic Studies courses in Los Angeles, Pico Rivera, Azusa, Culver City, El Monte, Long Beach, and Pomona (LACOE, 2022).

These courses provide a powerful tool to address the social, cultural, and academic needs of marginalized students by providing them with the opportunity to learn about the histories, struggles, cultures, and contributions to American society of Asians, Black people, Latinos, and Native Americans, which have often been historically untold in US history courses. However, to see its full potential realized, teachers will need preparation and coaching to reflect on and reduce their personal bias, develop content, and facilitate difficult conversations with students.

Ethnic Studies as Framework for Solidarity

Since students will be learning about the contributions of at least four groups: Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans, PON identified the need to complement this knowledge by also highlighting how struggles are similar among the groups. In addition, we shared knowledge on how successful social movements have been even more inspiring, impactful, and sustainable over time when various ethnic/racial communities join in solidarity to advocate for change.

Family Engagement and Student Outcomes

The persistent, dedicated efforts to improve student academic outcomes often fall short of involving parents and families in the schooling of children. Parents are important for children's school performance, especially during the first years of schooling, when children are more dependent on their parents and need guidance. Research has consistently demonstrated the positive influence of parents and family on a student's academic performance (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling (2011). Family engagement beyond the homework folder, parent-teacher conferences, and Back-to-School nights are a starting point for involving parents in their child's education, however, engagement needs to extend beyond one-time annual events. Authentic engagement allows for practices that help teachers build trusting and respectful relationships with all families to identify students and family cultural, linguistic, and other assets; integrate learnings into

lesson plans and curriculum; link engagement to student learning; collaborate with families to assess development and academic progress, set a plan for continuous improvement; and connect families that need more support with resources.

Studies have concluded that strong family–school partnerships are an important part of student success. When children have support and reassurance from the most important adults in their lives – parents/caregivers and teachers – there is a growth in self confidence and motivation (Mapp, Henderson, Cuevas, Franco, & Ewert, 2022). Furthermore, there is benefit to parents, schools, and community including strong parent-child relationships, positive school climate and more support from community, and higher levels of participation in afterschool programs and increased high school graduation rates, respectively (Mapp, et al., 2022).

Impact on Student Academic Outcomes

Research confirms the benefits of ethnic studies and family engagement on student wellness and overall academic achievement. Although the new high school graduation requirement applies to the current first-year class, we are confident that the benefits will extend school-wide, as well as in the home and community.

Early studies on the positive impact of ethnic studies curricula revealed the benefit to student outcomes. Relative to African American and Mexican American students respectively, a study examined the effects of an Afrocentric U.S. History curriculum on Black student achievement, implemented with 8th grade students in Harlem, New York highlighted an increase in self-efficacy and overall increased academic achievement (Duncan, W. 2012), while a University of Arizona study that assessed the impact of Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson, Arizona revealed that students enrolled in MAS program outperformed their non-MAS peers in achievement scores and graduation rates (Cabrera et al, 2014).

More recent studies reveal similar positive outcomes. A study out of Stanford highlighted that the ninth (9th) grade Ethnic Studies curriculum implemented in San Francisco led to large and statistically significant improvements in students' ninth-grade GPA, overall attendance, and credits earned among students encouraged to take the course (Dee & Penner, 2017). A follow up study revealed that participation in 9th grade Ethnic Studies courses significantly increased their overall engagement in school, increased probability of graduating high school, and increased likelihood of enrolling in college (Bonilla, Dee & Penner, 2021).



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Planning Team

The development and planning of the project was a collective effort by the Project Planning Team comprised of Ms. Araceli Simeón, Executive Director of Parent Organization Network; Dr. Joyce G. Watts, Advisory Board Co-Chair, Parent Organization Network; Dr. Corina Espinoza, Project Consultant; Toni Tinker-Loken Consultant from The Loken Foundation; and Ms. Yolande Beckles, President, National Association of African American Parents & Youth (NAAAPY).

Planning Process: Planning Team

Araceli Simeón worked closely with Dr. Joyce Watts to guide the discussion of parent needs and project possibilities to meet those needs. Dr. Watts also served as the lead content advisor for the African American Affinity Group. In 2023, Dr. Corina Espinoza was enlisted to guide, support, and facilitate the development of the program's purpose, goals, objectives, and curriculum materials. She also served as the lead content advisor for the Latino Affinity Group. Toni Tinker-Loken joined the planning team in the later stages of the project in 2024 and served as a co-facilitator and data analysis specialist. Yolande Beckles began participating in the project in 2023, when the National Association for African American Parents & Youth (NAAAPY) became a PON member.

The team met regularly via Zoom and in person, from biweekly to monthly, depending on the task or topic that needed to be addressed, maintained consistent communication on all planning matters, and contributed to joint review of all documents. As part of the planning process, the team enlisted input from various stakeholders to gain perspective on the proposed project and parents' needs and observations

Planning Process: Focus Groups

The planning started in November 2022 with three work groups facilitated by Dr. Watts that focused discussion on the type of engagement that parents believed was needed to have cross-cultural dialogue and build solidarity across communities. The discussions uplifted three areas:

- **Understanding shared history and cultures**
- **Having dialogue across cultural and ethnic communities**
- **Building solidarity through collective/community action (e.g., projects)**

Planning Process: Task Force

The PON Solidarity project formed a Task Force comprised of community-based practitioners and academic experts to provide their expertise insight on the development of a parent curriculum centered on Ethnic Studies. Members of the Task Force include highly respected experts who were successful leaders and partners at an earlier period. They anchored the Multicultural Collaborative, the New Majority Task Force and the African and Latino Youth Summit (ALYS/"Allies"). These exemplary projects helped set a precedent for cross-cultural solidarity in Los Angeles schools and community that we can learn from in developing our current projects.

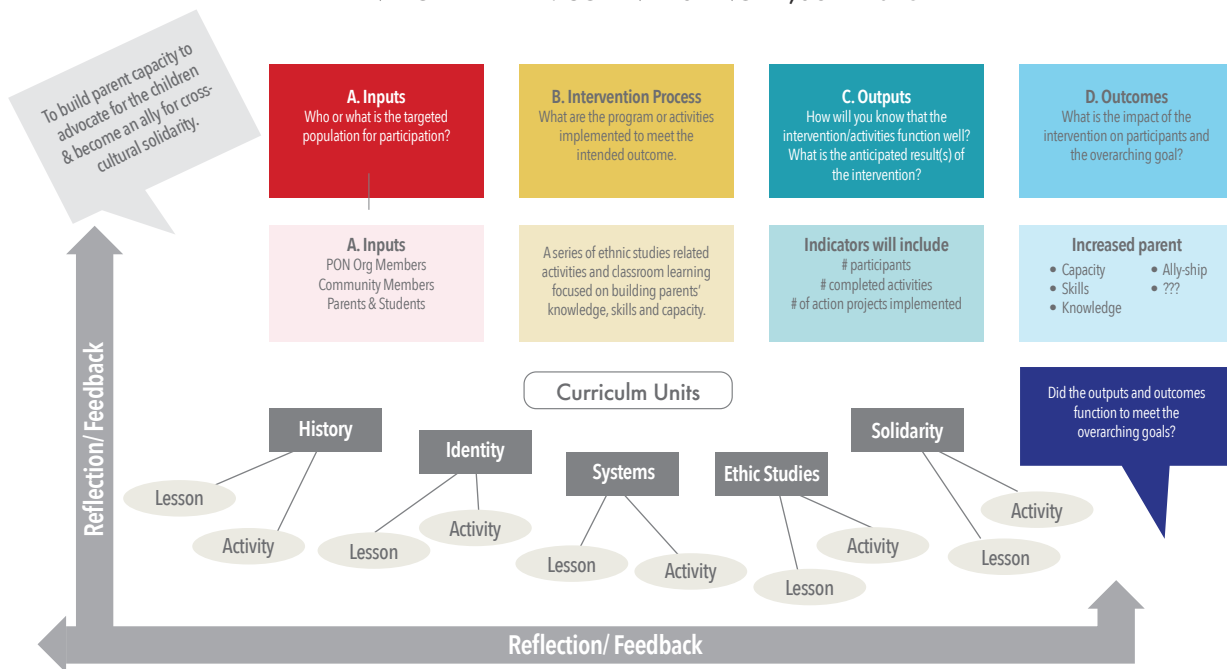
TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Stewart and Pat Kwoh, Co-Founders, Asian American Education Project
- Dr. Jose F. Moreno, Professor, Chicano Studies, CSU, Long Beach
- Dr. Rosa RiVera Furumoto, Padres Pioneros Founder and Chair, Chicana/o Studies Department, CSU Northridge
- Jesus Sanchez, Executive Director and Founder, Gente Organizada
- Carlos R. Valle & Élice Hennessee, Co-Executive Directors, CADRE
- Prof. Ron Wilkins, Historiographic Specialist, Black & Mexican Solidarity; Co-Founder African and Latino Youth Summit (ALYS/"Allies"); Co-Organizer, "Journey to Black Mexico"
- Dr. Joyce Watts, Co-Chair, PON Advisory Board; Co-Founder African and Latino Youth Summit (ALYS/"Allies"); Co-Organizer, "Journey to Black Mexico"

While the Task Force members were not able to meet as regularly as anticipated due to scheduling constraints, they, nonetheless, provided the planning team with valuable input on integrating relational experiences between ethnic communities and developing a theory of change to guide the planning, implementation, and reflection of the program.

Theory of Change: Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity

DEVELOPED BY DR. CORINA ESPINOZA, JULY 2023



That overall feedback and discussion, combined with input from CBO leaders, ethnic studies academics, and PON organization members, formed the basis for developing a parent education program that would center learning around developing and implementing the new Ethnic Studies high school graduation requirement. These conversations and feedback were the driving force behind creating Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity.

PLANNING PROCESS: PARENT/STUDENT SURVEY

In addition to the workgroups facilitated in the early stages of the project, the team developed and administered a Parent/Student Survey of Priorities Related to Cross-Cultural Solidarity. The goal of the survey was to solicit input from parents, students, and community members on issues and topics they believed were pertinent to building cross-cultural solidarity. In addition to collecting demographic data, the survey ask respondents to rank six (6) selected topics on a Likert scale of 1-not important, 2-somewhat important, or 3- very important. [See Appendix I]

The total survey responses exceeded the goal of 100 completed surveys, with a total of 177 from ethnically and geographically diverse participants, with the majority of those identifying as Latino/Hispanic/Mexican and living predominantly in the Southern California area. Respondents were also asked to list topics other than those in the survey that they believed were important to address. [See Appendix II]

Planning Process: Establishing Program Goals

Based on input from the various stakeholders, the planning team reviewed the survey feedback and goals were identified as part of developing a capacity-building and knowledge-growth program for families and community members. The intended goals would complement and coincide with the implementation of Ethnic Studies courses in public high schools.

The proposed goals for the program would leverage the Ethnic Studies requirement as a framework to help parents:

- Gain foundational knowledge of their own ethnic identity to build the capacity to discuss the issues of race, racism, culture, and ethnicity.
- Increase parents' awareness and understanding of U.S. history as it relates to anti-Blackness and exclusion of non-Whites.
- Build parent awareness and understanding of Ethnic Studies as part of building capacity and agency to support their students and work collaboratively to advocate for the children in the community.
- Build parent agency to create collaboration and partnerships with government agencies, universities, and community-based organizations.
- Foster open communication and a common pathway toward becoming an ally and stand in solidarity with other communities.

Planning Process: Program Learning Goals and Objectives

The planning for the project began in December 2022 with two work groups that focused on discussing what type of engagement parents believed was needed in order to have cross-cultural dialogue and build solidarity across communities. The results were:

- Understanding histories and cultures
- Having dialogue across cultural and ethnic communities
- Building solidarity through collective/community action (e.g., projects)

The overall feedback and discussion, combined with input from CBO leaders, Ethnic Studies academics, and PON organization members, helped form the basis for developing a Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity program that would center learning around knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the new Ethnic Studies high school graduation requirement.

Planning Process: Participant Learning Topics

The planning team continued with developing the key learning areas to include in the program’s curriculum. The discussion centered on the question: what is important for parents/caregivers to know about Ethnic Studies, the content of these courses, and process for school implementation. After multiple versions, reviews, and revisions, the following are the six (6) learning topics (with proposed objective) that were agreed upon:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| IDENTITY | The objective is to build participants’ knowledge and understanding of the relationship between their cultural identity, colorism, and colonialism. |
| HISTORY | The objective is to build participants’ understanding of the historical context of collaboration amongst communities of color and the role of colonialism. |
| SYSTEMS OF POWER | The objective is to strengthen participants’ knowledge of power in systems and their ability to question systems. |
| ETHNIC STUDIES | The objective is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the new Ethnic Studies requirement by participants to advocate for their students. |
| SOLIDARITY | The objective is to provide knowledge of instances of solidarity, both historical and contemporary, across communities to support shared issues. |

The order of topics listed was an effort to scaffold participants’ learning of key topics leading up to the discussion of cross-cultural solidarity.

**LA CANTIDAD DE
CONOCIMIENTOS,
HECHOS Y DATOS
COMPARTIDOS.**



**I LIKED THE
AMOUNT OF
KNOWLEDGE,
FACTS, AND
DATA SHARED**



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The next planning phase for the program was to develop a plan for the implementation and delivery of the program, which entailed varying aspects of outreach, recruitment, and support from community organizations.

Outreach & Recruitment

There was direct outreach done via emails and other announcements to networks of organizations that planning team members were familiar with or affiliated with. There was a fair number of responses and enlistment from persons affiliated with varied Latino community organizations, including PON leadership members and members of Best Start Region I that Dr. Espinoza had previously collaborated with. The responsiveness to the invitation may be attributed to previous working relationships and outreach materials in Spanish, both of which fostered inclusivity by Latino participants.

Conversely, the limited response by African American/Black community members presented a challenge which the planning team acknowledged may have been related to the manner and type of outreach that was done. The team paused and pivoted to focus on outreach that was more direct, personal, and included recruitment materials that were more culturally responsive (Appendix: III). In addition, the team tapped into people with a network of peers, colleagues, and community members to outreach to, and an announcement was made at the Black Family Summit hosted by NAAAPY (April 2024). The new outreach plan relied on the support and collaboration of peer parent/community organizations in a more central role.

Collaboration

A fundamental aspect of community-based partnerships is trust. As a pillar of good community partnerships, partners rely on the collaboration is transparent and of mutual benefit (Urban Institute, 2021). Working together toward a common goal can help organizations break down barriers and misperceptions and enable them to trust one another and can boost efforts around an issue (Snow, J. 20212). In our project, this has tremendous implications for the effectiveness in moving the agenda for equity and excellence in student achievement involving the lowest performing groups. The support for the Cross-Cultural Solidarity project from peer parent organizations played an invaluable role in recruiting participants. Community partners like CADRE, Padres Pioneros, Para Los Niños, Loken Foundation, and The Knowledge Shop shared the program information via announcements, mailers, and personal invitations with their respective members and surrounding communities allowed for trust to build.



PROGRAM DELIVERY

Format

The program consisted of pre-sessions that participants were required to attend. The pre-sessions were conducted via Zoom and there was one in-person session for each affinity group. The affinity groups allowed respective group members the opportunity to engage in discussion and peer learning with people with shared lived experiences. Thereafter, the two affinity groups were convened for a culminating event intended to bridge mutual, shared, and collaborative learning during pre-sessions.

The culminating activity of the program was a one-day, in person retreat for participants that highlighted presentations, guest speakers, interactive activities, peer discussion, and relationship building. Overall feedback revealed that participants were pleased with the retreat topics, facilitators, venue, and meeting community members.

Latino Affinity Group		
Date	Topic	Delivery
Pre-session 1: Wednesday, April 10, 2024	Cultural & Ethnic Identity (cohort 1)	Virtual
Pre-session 2 (part 1): Monday, April 15, 2024	Cultural & Ethnic Identity (cohort 2)	Virtual
Pre-session 2 (part 2): Wednesday, April 17, 2024	Shared Histories, evening] (Both cohorts)	Virtual
Pre-Session 3: Wednesday, April 24, 2024	Moments of Solidarity: Black and Brown Social Movements (Both cohorts)	Virtual
Pre-session 3: Saturday, June 1, 2024	Cultural & Ethnic Identity (continued), Ethnic Studies	In-person
Culminating Event: Retreat - Saturday, July 13, 2024	Review of Past Topics, Systems of Power, & Next Steps to Build Solidarity	In-person

“AGRADEZCO ESTOS ESPACIOS PARA HACE CONEXIONES, CONCIENTIZACIÓN DEL PROBLEMA SISTÉMICO Y CÓMO FUNCIONA LA OPRESIÓN PARA MEJORAR NUESTRA COMUNIDAD MÁS ESPACIOS COMO ESTOS SON IMPORTANTES Y VALIOSOS.”



African American/Black Affinity Group

Date	Topic	Delivery
Pre-session 1: Saturday, May 18, 2024	Ethnic Studies, Cultural & Ethnic Identity	Virtual
Pre-session 2: Thursday, June 8, 2024	Ethnic Studies, Cultural & Ethnic Identity	Virtual
Pre-session 3: Saturday, June 29, 2024	Moments of Solidarity: Black and Brown Social Movements	In-person
Culminating Event: Retreat - July 13, 2024	Review of Past Topics, Systems of Power, & Next Steps to Build Solidarity	In-person



“THANK YOU FOR THESE SPACES TO MAKE CONNECTIONS, RAISE AWARENESS OF THE SYSTEMIC PROBLEM AND HOW OPPRESSION WORKS TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY.” **“MORE SPACES LIKE THESE ARE IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE”**



ASSESSMENT

The Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity project included an assessment of the retreat as an event and participants' learning levels. Surveys were developed to obtain 1) a glimpse of participants' learning levels in the five themes of cultural identity, Latino and Black History, Systems of Power, Ethnic Studies, and Solidarity and 2) feedback on the program and retreat's effectiveness.

Participants

Program participants represented various school districts, with 31.2% identifying LAUSD as their affiliated school district, 8.3% identifying Pomona USD as their affiliated school district, and 2% identifying Central USD as their associated District, which is within LAUSD. Fifty-eight percent of participants did not answer/did not respond to the question. The charts below summarize the breakdown of attendees for each session.

Survey responses show the majority of participants were parents (54.2%), followed by nonprofit reps (16.7%) and community members (16.7%).

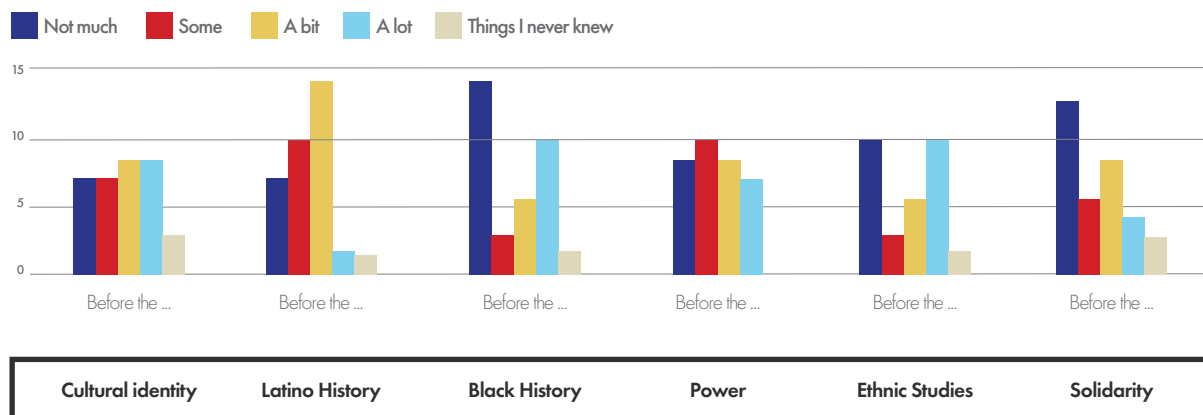
Results: Learning Outcomes

A pre- and post-retrospective self-reporting survey [Appendix IV] was prepared and distributed at the end of the retreat.

The chart below illustrates the responses given before and after participation in the program sessions. As noted, the results show that before the program participants either knew "a bit" (yellow) or "not much" (blue). However, after the program, responses show an increase -- "a lot" (light blue) -- in knowledge and understanding by participants.

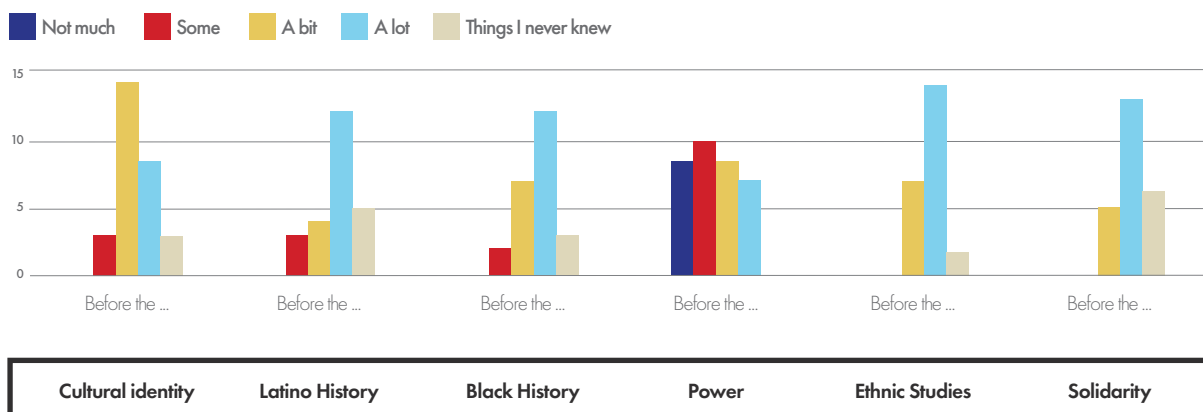
BEFORE (PRE)

Before the program, results show that participants either knew “a bit” (yellow) or “not much” (blue)



AFTER (PRE)

After the program, responses show there was an increase - “a lot” (light blue) - in knowledge and understanding by participants.



Based on self-reported survey responses, there was a level of increased base knowledge of the five targeted learning topics: Cultural Identities, Latino/Black History, Power, Ethnic Studies, and Solidarity. The facilitators’ general observations showed that participants’ knowledge varied from novice to mastery level among the five targeted outcomes.

The content shared with each affinity group was modified to meet the individual and collective understanding of the themes within each affinity group. For example, overall, African American parents were more familiar with or knowledgeable about education, the history of schooling, and other structural inequalities for African Americans in the 20th century. However, they were less likely to understand that oppressive and unequal systematic practices were inflicted on other historically marginalized ethnic communities in the United States.

The Latino/a participants needed to gain more familiarity with the topics presented, a factor likely influenced by participants receiving formal schooling outside the United States. The commonality between the groups was being able to express personal or family-lived experiences that aligned with the topics, i.e., colorism, racial profiling, discrimination, etc.

ME GUSTÓ QUE APRENDÍ MUCHAS COSAS QUE NO SABÍA QUE HABÍA."

NECESITAMOS CREAR UN EQUIPO, UNA RED DE APOYO Y TRABAJO.



I LIKED THAT I LEARNED MANY THINGS THAT I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS.

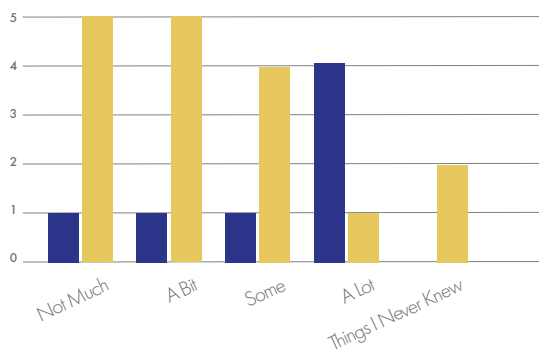
RESULTS: RESPONSES BY AFFINITY GROUP

Identity

- **Before** the program, Latino participants had less familiarity with the topic of cultural and ethnic identity, while Black participants had "a lot" of familiarity of the topic.
- **After** the program, responses show that Latino participants' familiarity of the topic increased "a lot." Comparably, for some Black participants there was an increase to "a lot" and "things I never knew."

PRE-SURVEY

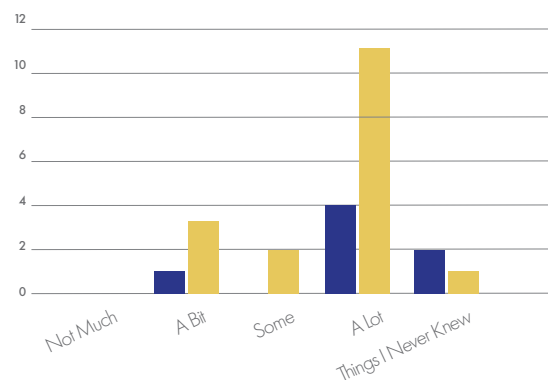
BEFORE THE PROGRAM, HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CULTURAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY?



Black Latino
Participations

POST-SURVEY

AFTER THE PROGRAM, DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY INCREASE?



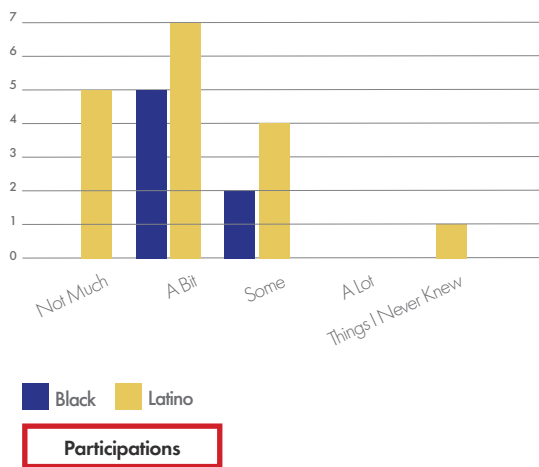
Black Latino
Participations

History

- On the topic of Latino history, before participation, Black and Latino participants had about the same level of familiarity on the topic, with Latino participants slightly less – “a bit” -- informed.
- **After** participating, Latino participants expressed an increase in their knowledge to “a lot” and “things I never knew.”

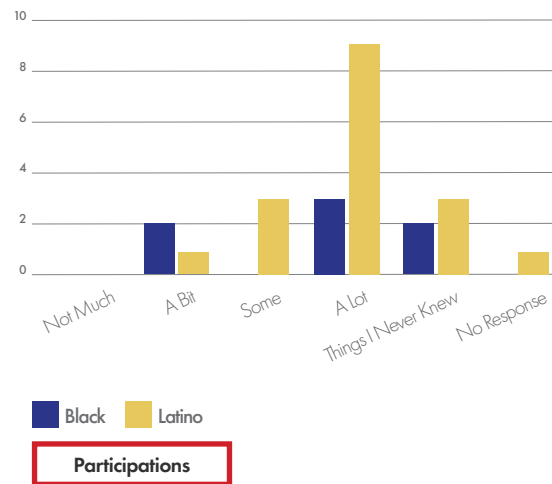
PRE-SURVEY

BEFORE THE PROGRAM, HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT U.S. LATINO HISTORY?



POST-SURVEY

AFTER THE PROGRAM, DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING OF ABOUT U.S. LATINO HISTORY INCREASE?



CONCIENTIZACIÓN, EDUCACIÓN SOBRE LA OPRESIÓN SISTÉMICA, QUE EL DÍA A DÍA NO SE VE EL IMPACTO O VEMOS REALIDAD.”
AWARENESS, EDUCATION ABOUT SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION, THAT EVERY DAY WE DO NOT SEE THE IMPACT OR SEE REALITY.



CONOCER LAS HISTORIAS ES MUY IMPORTANTE PARA CONSTRUIR LA SOLIDARIDAD INTERCULTURAL.



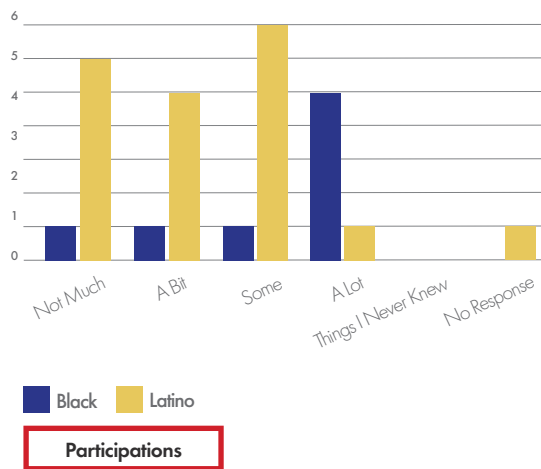
KNOWING STORIES IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY.

Systems of Power

- **Before** the program, Latino participants' familiarity of systems of power ranged from 'not much' to 'a bit,' to 'some,' while Black participants started the program with 'a lot' of knowledge of systems of power.
- **After** program participation, Latino participants' responses show that 'a bit' of knowledge increased along with 'a lot.' Black participants responses showed that they learned 'things I never knew.'

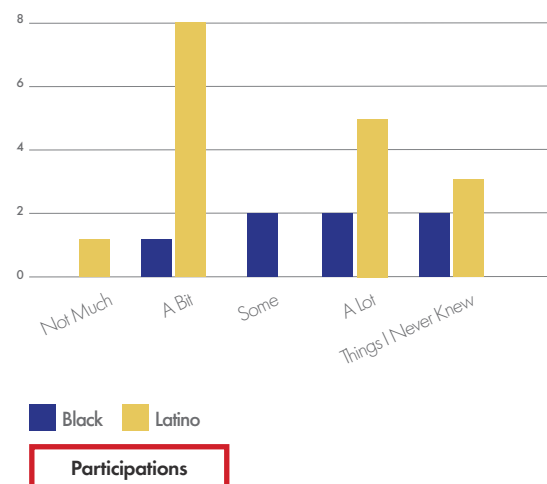
PRE-SURVEY

BEFORE THE PROGRAM, HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT SYSTEMS OF POWER?



POST-SURVEY

AFTER THE PROGRAM, DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF ABOUT SYSTEMS OF POWER INCREASE?

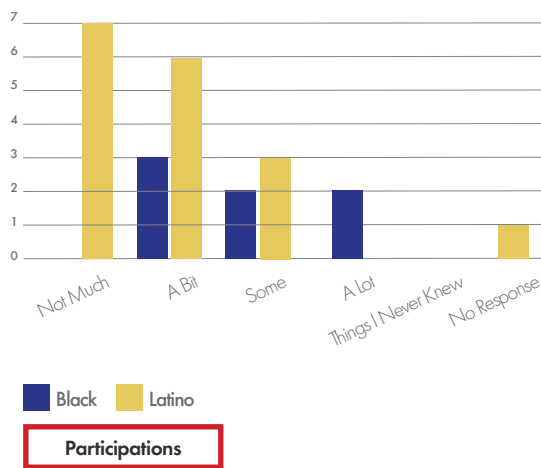


Ethnic Studies

- **Before** the program, Latino participants were on the lower end of the scale – ‘not much’ to ‘some’ – on knowledge of Ethnic Studies, with Black participants starting with ‘a bit’ and ‘a lot’ of knowledge.
- **After** the program, responses show varying levels of increase by Latino participant including ‘a lot’ and ‘things I never knew.’ There was also increase in ‘a lot’ and ‘things I never knew’ by Black participants knew.”

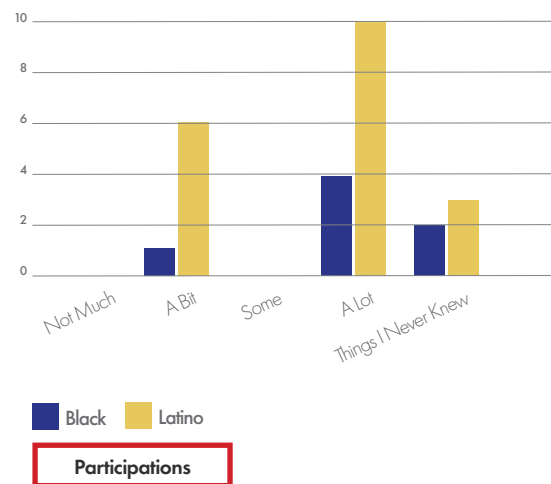
PRE-SURVEY

BEFORE THE PROGRAM, HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT ETHNIC STUDIES?



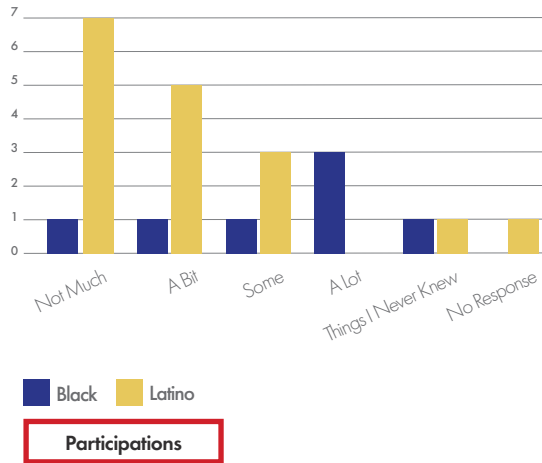
POST-SURVEY

AFTER THE PROGRAM, DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF ETHNIC STUDIES INCREASE?



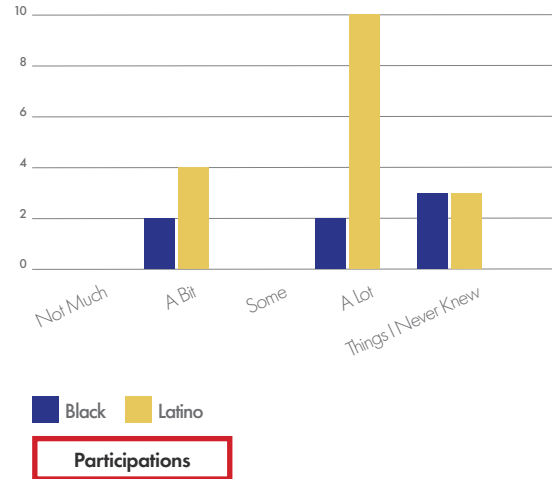
PRE-SURVEY

BEFORE THE PROGRAM, HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY?



POST-SURVEY

AFTER THE PROGRAM, DID YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY INCREASE?



On the topic of cross-cultural solidarity, before the program Latino participants were on the lower end of scale with 'not much' and 'a bit' having the highest number, whereas Black participants expressed 'a lot' of knowledge of the topic. After the program, the level of knowledge increased 'a lot' and 'things I never knew' for Latino participants.





ASSESSMENT: LIMITATIONS

The parent/student survey, while not a scientific, controlled experiment, did provide a glimpse of baseline knowledge of participants' before and after their participation in the program. The sample size (N=24) was specific to program participants that completed all program components; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to people with similar characteristics and exposure to same learning topics. The survey results provided the planning team with information to review and reflect on where there may be areas for improvement to the program.

Program Evaluation

Participants were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on the program overall and the one-day retreat. Overall, participants found the program to be informative and enlightening, with many citing "things they did not know" in their comments. The one-day retreat was also well received as participants shared positive reactions to the venue, the childcare service, interpreters, facilitators, information presented, and the opportunity to meet other parents and community members.

The retreat was an exceptional opportunity; however, the landscape of parent engagement and parent programs is moving from onsite, real-time gatherings to virtual program delivery options available from a host of tech platforms. The change to virtual is more cost effective for nonprofit organizations reliant on funders and sponsors. The organization does not have to provide copies of material, rent office space, provide transportation and mileage, which is cost effective. Therefore, virtual delivery is best for informational presentations. However, the impact and effectiveness of learning are greatly diminished as well as capacity building on more involved topics.

ME GUSTÓ TODA LA PROGRAMACIÓN, LOS FACILITADORES EXCELENTES, LA INFORMACIÓN MUY INTERESANTE. TODA LA INFORMACIÓN SE LA PASARÉ A MIS HIJOS Y MI COMUNIDAD. I LIKED ALL THE PROGRAMMING, THE EXCELLENT FACILITATORS, THE INFORMATION IS VERY INTERESTING.





LESSONS & NEXT STEPS

LESSONS LEARNED

There were valuable lessons learned by the planning team and partner organizations.

- Be able to pivot and allow for flexibility and nimbleness to adapt programs, as well as patience and the ability to deal with ambiguity. We changed outreach strategies when those did not work as expected for the Black community.
- Be mindful of and open to vulnerability, by both program participants and team members. It is critical to have open, transparent discussion and feedback. Although the time to do this may delay action in the short term, it establishes a foundation of trust and transparency to build upon in the long term. As the saying goes, it is best to go slow so the group goes together, than to go fast and do it alone.
- The importance of co-construction – building and creating together -- with parents & community members having an inclusive role in the planning and implementation of the project yields more meaningful engagement for participants and greater commitment to continued participation. The next phase to build solidarity will be intentionally co-designed with parents to engage in additional learning, experiences, and projects they want to engage with.
- Be intentional in the design of the program. Recognize that although groups have similar needs, the approaches to successfully engage each community may be different. Affinity groups were established so each community had space to learn and process information about their own group and others, before engaging together. This space also allowed for meaningful multigenerational exchange among African Americans, as the participant age range was broader than in the Latino group.
- The racial composition of the group intentionally included about 60% Latinos and 40% Black parents or community members to balance power dynamics, rather than reflecting current community or Los Angeles County demographics.
- Maintain documentation of the different types of meetings and other forums, including planning meeting notes or recordings for review and consensus.



PS

NEXT STEPS

Towards the conclusion of the Cross-Cultural Solidarity Retreat in July, a total of 12 parents/community members, six Black and six Latino volunteers, signed up to form a committee to continue co-designing the work with PON staff and partners. Three priorities the group identified included:

1. Continue learning about each other's histories and history of solidarity. This includes collecting their own stories and going on field trips.
2. Build capacity to work with each other, increase comfort level and confidence to challenge racism, and stand in solidarity with others including interactive activities engaging people different from our own racial/ethnic group.
3. Engage in projects to practice solidarity as it relates to:
 - a. Identifying issues where there is common ground (e.g., challenges related to how student attendance is recorded for low-income students)
 - b. Increasing understanding of each other's perspectives where there is common ground (e.g., school police and safety).
 - c. Learning how to advocate for one others' issues (i.e., Black parents advocating for English learners, and Latino parents advocating for Black students).

Also, based on the learnings from implementing the program once, PON staff and partners are reflecting on the feedback to modify the program for a second cohort of participants in the future. For example, because the program was focused on ethnic studies, the participants began the history review after colonization, slavery, and dispossession of land from and genocide of Indigenous people took place. A request from participants is to begin the history review before colonization, acknowledging the contributions and brilliance of our ancestors from African, Aztec, Mayan, and other Indigenous civilizations. We also are sensitive to the effects of the election and are prepared to create space for sensitivity and affirmation from a nonpartisan perspective in response to the feelings that parents may express that are pertinent to cross-cultural solidarity. **Additional funding sources are being pursued to support the work.**



SOURCES

- California Department of Education <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/ethnicguidelines.asp>
- The State of Latinos in Higher Education in California (2021). Campaign for College Opportunity, Los Angeles.
- Bonilla, S., Dee, T.S., Penner, K., (2021). Ethnic studies increases longer-run academic engagement and attainment, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2026386118>
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- Duncan, W. (2012). The effects of africentric united states history curriculum on Black student achievement, *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, v5, n2 p91-96.
- LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 55(3), 115–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10459880903472876>
- Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Training PPT
- Mapp, K., Henderson, A., Cuevas, C., Franco, M., & Ewert, S. (2022). Everyone wins! Scholastic Professional.
- National Assessment Education Progress (NAEP) <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- John Snow, Inc. (JSI) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), January 2012.





APPENDIX I: PARENT SURVEY



PARENT ORGANIZATION NETWORK: CAMPAIGN FOR CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

Spring 2023

Parent/Student Survey of Priorities Related to Cross Cultural Solidarity

Thank you for sharing your opinions about topics related to cross-cultural solidarity. Please complete the following:

A. I am a ____ PARENT or GUARDIAN of children in (check all that apply):

Elem Middle High School

I am a STUDENT in: Middle High School

Race/Ethnicity: I identify as _____ Gender: I identify as _____

B. District: _____

Please rate **each topic** according to how important it is to you:

C. Building my capacity to discuss issues of race, racism, culture, ethnicity, and related matters.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

D. Understanding my own identity and biases, and also my child's identity formation.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

E. Understanding how U.S. history relates to anti-Blackness and exclusion of diverse populations.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

F. Understanding why students will have to complete ethnic studies as a graduation requirement.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

G. Helping integrate cross-cultural solidarity as part of the ethnic studies high school curriculum.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

H. Becoming an ally and standing in solidarity with other diverse communities.

1 Not Important 2 Somewhat Important 3 Very Important

J. **Claim your gift card.** Thank you for completing the survey! To claim your \$10 gift card to Target, please provide your name and e-mail if you would like to receive it electronically or your name and mailing address to if you would like receive it via U.S. mail.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Or

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City/State/Zip code: _____

APPENDIX II: OUTREACH FLYER (ALL)

BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

BACKGROUND

The Parent Organization Network (PON) was founded by three civil rights organizations in Los Angeles that believed in a multicultural approach to assessing educational issues, planning, and executing solutions that engage parents.

(PON) has a deep commitment to the growth and potential of parent engagement in their child's education. Current data on student academic achievement, regrettably shows that disparities continue, especially for students of color. There is a sense of urgency around improving academic excellence for all students and families.

Our starting point is enlisting parents and families in a project that will provide greater understanding of the high school curriculum, in particular the recent development and implementation of the high school ethnic studies graduation requirement.



ABOUT BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

Passed in 2021, AB 101 requires all high school students to complete a course in ethnic studies to graduate starting in the 2029-30. High schools must offer these courses in 2025-26.

Research confirms the benefits of ethnic studies and family engagement on student wellness and overall achievement. Although the new graduation requirement applies to the current freshman class, we are confident that the benefits will extend schoolwide, as well as in home and community.

The overarching goal of this project is to leverage the ethnic studies requirement to build cross-cultural solidarity in PON by developing a multi-generational program for families and community members that would complement and coincide with the roll out of ethnic studies in high schools.



YOU'RE INVITED!

PON is excited to invite parents to explore and to collaborate in **Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity** to boost parent and student engagement, while promoting cross-cultural solidarity.

The overall goal of the project is to build parent awareness and understanding of Ethnic Studies graduation requirement, as part of building parent capacity and agency to work collaboratively to advocate for the children in the community.



BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY



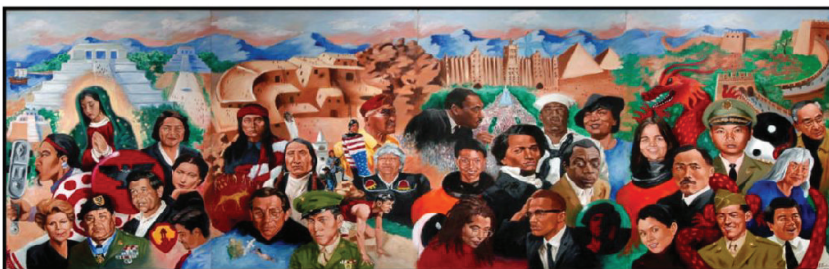
ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to 30 participants from PON member organizations, with a goal of having representation from the ethnic communities traditionally represented in ethnic studies curricula – African American, Chicano/Latino, Asian American, and Native American. Participation requires attendance at all program sessions. See details section.

BENEFITS

Your participation will lead to ...

- ... **greater understanding** of “Where we’ve been, where we are, and where we can be” as communities in cross-cultural solidarity,
- ... **increased capacity & skills**, awareness, basic knowledge and understanding of ethnic studies and its benefits, how to support their student,
- ... how to **work collectively** across cultural and ethnic communities,
- ... **expanding your network** of parent leaders and community organizations, and
- ... a **\$250 stipend** for participating and completing the program!



For information and to **RSVP**, please contact Dr. Corina Espinoza at drcespinoza@gmail.com by **Friday, March 30, 2024.**

DETAILS

The program will have various types of activities.

- **classroom learning** with parent leaders, academic experts, community associates, and others.
- cultural and **historical site visits** to learn about shared histories.
- **discussion and dialogue** of current education issues,
- and **community action projects**.

FORMAT

There will be **three (3) mandatory pre-sessions** that include one session, followed by a joint session.

Pre-session 1	Cohort #1	Wed. April 10, 2024
Pre-session 2	Cohort #2	Mon. April 15, 2024
Joint session 3	Cohorts 1 & 2	Wed. April 17, 2024

CULMINATING EVENT

The culminating event of the program is a **1-day retreat, Saturday, April 20, 2024**, with presentations, activities, discussions, and relationship building.

Participation requires participants to attend all program sessions.

APPENDIX III: OUTREACH FLYER (BLACK AFFINITY GROUP)

BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

Outside Panels of Brochure: Cover and Last Page



Benefits

1. Greater understanding of where we've been, where we are, and where we can be
2. Increased capacity & skills, awareness, basic knowledge and understanding of Ethnic Studies
3. How to work collectively, cross-cultural and Ethnic Studies
4. Expanding your network of parent leaders and community organizations
5. A \$250 stipend for completing ALL sessions and the retreat

Be informed. Be connected. Be inspired

Afrocentric Parent Engagement Sessions



Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity Through Understanding of the Ethnic Studies Requirement

sponsored by:   

Inside Panels of Brochure

YOU'RE INVITED

WE ARE EXCITED TO COLLABORATE WITH PON AND THE LOKEN FOUNDATION TO INVITE OUR PARENTS TO A BLACK PARENT-ONLY SAFE SPACE TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY TO HELP FOSTER ADVANCEMENT AND SECURITY FOR OUR BLACK COMMUNITIES.

THE OVERALL GOAL OF THESE SESSIONS IS TO BUILD PARENT AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE ETHNIC STUDIES GRADUATION REQUIREMENT, WHICH IS PART OF BUILDING CAPACITY AND AGENCY TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ADVOCATE FOR ALL CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITIES.



The program will have various types of activities including:

- Classroom learning
- Cultural and historical site visits
- Discussions & Dialogue
- Community projects

CONTEXT FOR THIS PROGRAM

CURRENT DATA ON STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SHOWS THAT DISPARITIES CONTINUE, ESPECIALLY FOR BLACK STUDENTS.

PN, NAAAPY, AND THE LOKEN FOUNDATION ARE COMMITTED TO IMPROVING PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES. THIS PROJECT ENLISTS PARENTS IN A CO-CREATIVE LEARNING PROCESS THAT ENCOURAGES A COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOOLING AND OUR CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM – PARTICULARLY THE RECENT HIGH SCHOOL ETHNIC STUDIES GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

- June 29 Location: The Knowledge Shop
- July 12 Location: The Knowledge Shop
- July 13 Location: Echo Park

Session 1 90 min	Introduction	May 18, 2024 virtual	10 am - 12 pm
Session 2 90 min	Ethnic Studies & the Black Community	June 8, 2024 virtual	10 am - 12 pm
Session 3 4 hours	Ethnic Studies & the Black Community	June 29, 2024 in person	10 am - 2 pm
Session 4 2 hours	Wellness Debrief	July 12, 2024 in person	6 pm - 8 pm
Joint Session	Cross solidarity	July 13, 2024 in person	All Day

APPENDIX IV: PRE/POST ASSESSMENT SURVEY

RETREAT PARTICIPANT LERNING ASSESSMENT

- A. Affiliation: Parent Community member Nonprofit Representative Nonprofit Representative
- B. Home School District : _____
- C. Student(s) in: High School Middle School Elementary School Other

PRE

1. **After** the program, how much did you know about **cultural and ethnic identity**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
2. **After** the program, how much did you know about **U.S. Latino history**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
3. **After** the program, how much did you know about **cultural and ethnic identity**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
4. **After** the program, how much did you know about **systems of power**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
5. **After** the program, how much did you know about **Ethnic Studies**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
6. **Before** the program, how much did you know about **cross-cultural solidarity**?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!

POST

1. **After** the program, did your knowledge and understanding of **cultural and ethnic identity** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
2. **After** the program, did your knowledge and understanding of about **U.S. Latino history** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
3. **After** the program, did your knowledge and understanding of **African American/Black history** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
4. **After** the program, did your knowledge of **systems of power** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
5. **After** the program, did your knowledge of **Ethnic Studies** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!
6. **After** the program, did your knowledge of **cross-cultural solidarity** increase?
 1 Not much 2 Some 3 A bit 1 A lot 2 Some 3 Things I never knew!

**APPENDIX V:
PROGRAM
EVALUATION**



**PARENT ORGANIZATION NETWORK:
PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM**

Workshop Title: Building Cross-Cultural Solidarity

Date/Place: Saturday, July 13th, St. Paul’s Retreat Center

Affiliation: Parent/Guardian Community member Nonprofit Representative School Staff Other

Home School District : _____

Other _____

Please answer the following:	Total agreement	Agreement	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The site was appropriate for the retreat.					
2. The food service was very good.					
3. The facilitators were capable and prepared.					
4. Audio and supplies were adequate.					
5. The sessions prior to the program (Zoom or face-to-face) were informative.					
6. The number of previous sessions was adequate.					
7. I would recommend this program to others in my community.					
8. What did you like most about the program?					
9. How can we improve the program?					
10. Comments: Other feedback you'd like to share?					



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
FEEDBACK &
PARTICIPATION!**