

Tucson Unified

An Evolution of Mexican American Studies in Arizona

Arizona School Board
Association  ASBA
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Objectives for Today



1

Explore the history and impact of an effective K-12 Mexican American Studies program and its evolution in response to State legislation.



2

Understand the major programmatic and curricular differences between the Tucson Unified School District's Culturally Relevant Curriculum courses and previously offered Mexican American Studies courses.



3

Examine the roles of Mexican American Student Services and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy & Instruction in supporting culturally relevant course work and student achievement for Mexican American/Latinx students.

Timeline

1974

- African American & Mexican American plaintiffs file separate suits against the Tucson Unified School District

1975

- Both cases merged to become Fisher-Mendoza v. TUSD

1978

- U.S. District Judge Frey issues ruling ordering TUSD to eliminate all vestiges of discrimination in nine schools

1997-1998

- Mexican American community and Mendoza plaintiffs demand the creation of a stand-alone Mexican American Studies Department

2010

- Governor Brewer signs ARS 15-112 into law targeting TUSDs Mexican American Studies Department

2012

- Governing Board votes to dismantle the Mexican American Studies Department
- Unitary Status Plan calls for an increase in the number of Mexican American Studies courses through the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy & Instruction Department and development of student support services for Mexican American/Latino students

2017

- U.S. District Judge Tashima issues a final judgment prohibiting Arizona education officials from enforcing the 2010 law, ARS 15-112

2018

- MASSD reorganization
- Post-Unitary Plan court ordered

Continuing success for students



Comparison Highlights



MAS

- 8 Curriculum/Project Specialists
- Monthly teacher training
- Encuentro family events
- Summer Institute
- Activity Helpers/College
- MAS Courses- est. 1900 students
- *American History- Mexican American Perspective
- Core-credit ELA & SS courses
- *Social Justice Edu. Project (SJEP)

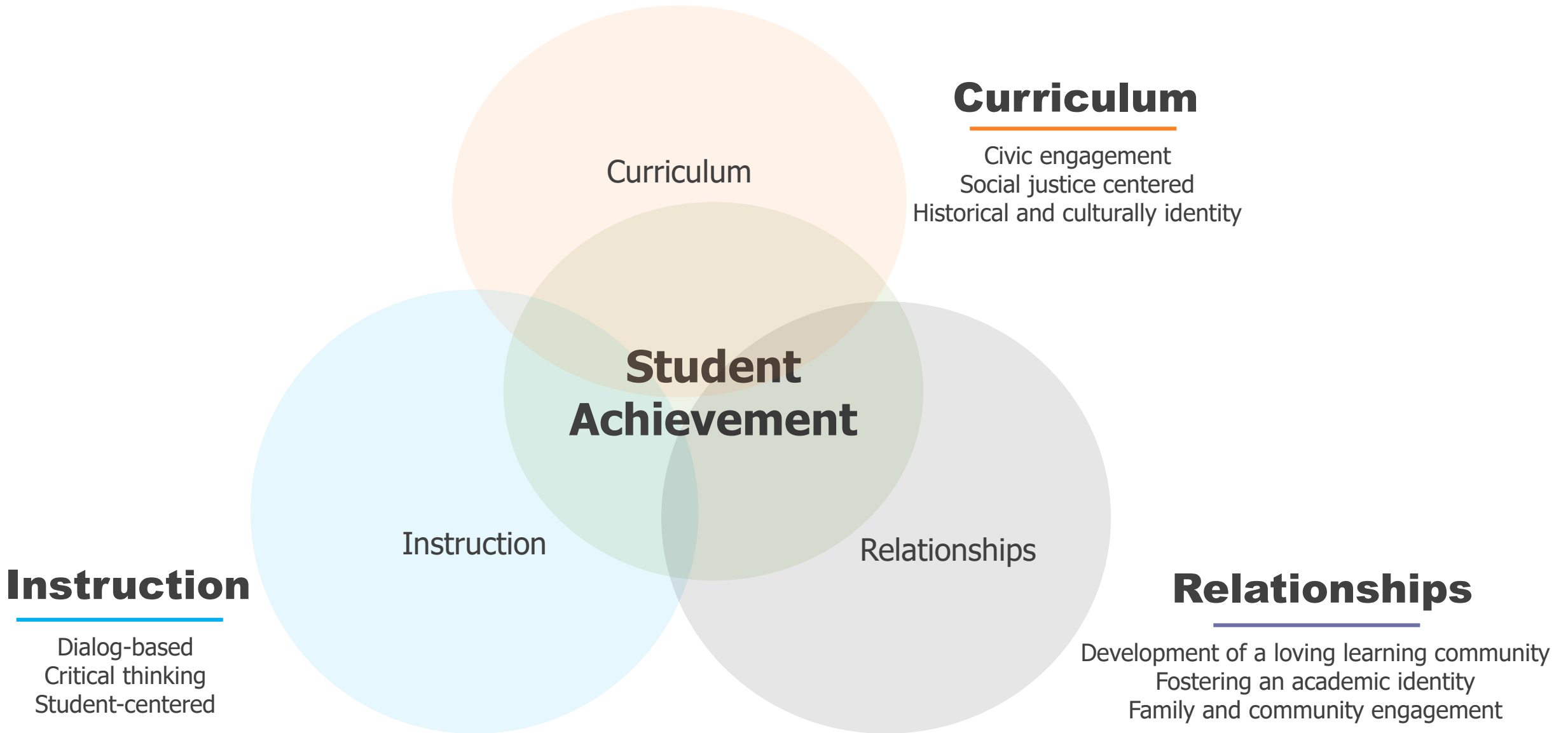


CRC

- 11 Master Teachers
- Monthly Tier I teacher PD
- Encuentro family events
- Summer Institute
- Activity Helpers/College
- CRC Courses- est. 6000 students
- Cult. Rel. Am. Hist- Mexican American Viewpoint
- Core-credit ELA & SS courses
- Dual enrollment college credit

Course Differences

MAS	CRC
1998-2010 SY	2013- present SY
No stand-alone district curriculum department	Developed under extreme scrutiny for violation of ARS 15-112
No comprehensive district curriculum	Underwent curricular review by ADE via monthly submission and ADE monitoring
MAS Scope and Sequence determined by each teacher in alignment with state standards	Alignment to state standards and district curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps aligned to district benchmark assessment and state standardized assessments • CRC Scope and Sequence aligned to Non-CRC
Curriculum developed independent of district assessments	Curriculum documents reviewed and revised yearly by CRPI
Comprehensive units of study	Teachers produce curriculum for CRC
Embedded district standards in units	CRPI developments district curriculum--Anti-bias framework
Developed without stigma of ARS- 15-112	Varying levels of teacher background knowledge in ethnic studies content, culturally responsive pedagogy & theoretical underpinnings
All teachers volunteered- No mandated expansion of courses	Semester-long Senior Government courses
Year-long Senior Government course	CR Staff has expertise with MAS and/or African American Studies
Staff consisted of content experts with MAS backgrounds	CRC Pedagogy based on MAS evidenced-based best practices
MAS teachers shared an intrinsic motivation	
Pedagogy based on Indigenous epistemology	



Research-based pedagogy & practices

Review of the data

- Cabrera, N. L., Milem, J. F., Jaquette, O., & Marx, R. W. (2014). Missing the (Student Achievement) Forest for All the (Political) Trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(6), 1084–1118.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214553705>

Evidence on relevance

- Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2017). The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence From an Ethnic Studies Curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 127–166.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216677002>

Overview of programmatic structures



Mexican American /Raza Studies Est. 1997

- Curriculum & Instruction with Direct & In-Direct Student Support Services
- Curriculum & Project Specialists
- Academic Specialists
- Community Advisory Board

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy & Instruction Est. 2011

- Curriculum & Instruction
- Master Teachers
- School-to-College Liaisons
- National Panel of Experts
- District-wide Culturally Responsive Practices PD

Mexican American Student Services Est. 2012

- Direct & In-Direct Student Support Services in collaboration with Curriculum & Instruction
- Program Specialists
- CRC Tutors/College Mentors
- Behavior Specialist
- Community Advisory Council, Parent Advisory Council, & Expert Panel

State Institution Demographics (%)

Shifts reflecting AZ public education

Looking at 2018 data

- 82% identified as students of color
- Sharp contrast with 55% in 1996 SY
- Teacher demographics in Tucson Unified:
 - 65% European American
 - 4% African American
 - 2% Native
 - 3% Asian American
 - 26% Mexican American/Latinx

	African American	Asian American	Mexican American/Latinx	European American	Native American	Multi-Racial
State Population	5.0	3.8	31.4	54.9	5.3	2.8
Tucson Unified SD	6.0	3.9	63.8	20.5	3.6	3.9
ASU/NAU/UA	4.2	6.1	24.3	59.1	1.5	4.6
DOC	14.5	1	38.6	39.2	5.5	2.2

Challenges & Courage



How do we break away from banking education and deficit thinking?



What can public school leaders do to address teacher demographics, preparation programs, and implicit bias?





How does a colorblind mentality and fear impact the students, parents, and community you serve?





Thank You

Tucson Unified

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