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LEAD Original Programming

“Campaign to Promote Ethnic Studies: The El Rancho and Long Beach Models” (2016)

START – 00:00:00

[Sound Effects]

[Music]

>> Bienvenidos and welcome to the next installment of the LEAD Media Programming from Studio 54, Campus of California State University of San Bernardino, the Digital Media Platform for Inspired Educators, Leaders and Community Activists and Advocates. Take our message directly to the people, to la gente. Thank you have sharing our common interest in the analysis discussion, critique, dissemination and commitment to the educational issues that impact Latino's. I'm your host, Dr. Enrique Murillo Jr. And this episode is a syndicated replay season seven of Lead Summit, 2016. The theme that year was Black Brown, Indigenous Unity, which was our special effort to address what was shared and this panel entitled, Campaign to Promote Ethnic Studies; The El Rancho and Long Beach Models. This presentation was made possible at the time by the collaboration among the California Mexico Study Center, the El Rancho Unified School District, and LEAD. As co-conveners of the now historic Campaign to Promote Ethnic Studies summit, which took place on October 18th, 2014. The CPES summit was webcast by LEAD throughout our worldwide network and had prompted the Los Angeles and San Francisco school districts to adopt policies similar to the historic El Rancho resolution, approved in June 2014, as the first ethnic studies graduation requirement by a local school board in California. The traction built up at our historic CPES summit prompted dozens of school boards throughout the United States to adopt comparable ethnic studies policies. Continue and enjoy the full value and complexity of this episode, we extend our appreciation to all our LEAD sponsor and partners, planners, volunteers, speakers and panelists, production team, affiliates and town hall chapters and commend them all for lifting their voice and uplifting the plight of Latino's in education. Thank you, gracias, [foreign language].

>> Okay, good afternoon. Before we begin I just want us to all give a first of all to LEAD and especially Dr. Murillo for all his hard work in organizing.

[Applause]

And I want to say that I'm extremely proud being present today. I was actually here seven years ago and when I was here I remember being in awe. So having the moment to actually speak to you to me, is just you know, how life is just in a circle. So to me it's very amazing. Ethnic studies, ethnic studies is something that's extremely important and

very powerful and today I will be reading an introduction on our campaign. So our campaign to promote ethnic studies, the El Rancho and Long Beach model. This presentation has been made possible by the California Mexico Study Center, El Rancho Unified School District and LEAD. As school conveners of the campaign to promote ethnic studies summit on October 18th at CSU Long Beach. The CBS summit was webcast by LEAD throughout its worldwide network and promoted Los Angeles and San Francisco school districts to adopt policies similar to the historic El Rancho Unified School District Resolution, approved in June 2014. As the first, as the first Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement by local school board and California, if we could just give a round of applause to that.

[Applause]

Because definitely and they will be speaking on it today, but they have paved the way for everybody else. So thank you so much. Since the CBS Summit, 15 to 20 more local school boards have adopted comparable ethnic studies policies throughout California. Including the Santa Ana, Montebello, [inaudible] Williams school districts. This panel will present on the progress that has been made at El Rancho Unified School District to build upon their landmark resolution, a comprehensive ethnic studies curriculum and also the president study in Long Beach Ethnic Studies Program. That has created a model for school districts, offering ethnic studies high school and college credit courses on Saturday's. The LBESP builds upon the nationally recognized Long Beach College providence relationship between the LBUS and CSULB. Supported with the [inaudible] committed by LBUSD to offer high school students at least 12 college credit ethnic studies courses every semester. The panelists will discuss in detail how these initiatives came about, their benefits and answer questions related to the campaign to promote ethnic studies goals, to promote ethnic studies for all students in the K-12 curriculum, throughout California and in the United States. Today we will be beginning with, we have Dr. Aurora Villon, she's school board president of El Rancho Unified School District. [applause] We also have present today Professor Armando Vazquez-Ramos, President of California-Mexico Studies Center.

[Applause]

And we also have Tino Gutierrez, El Rancho Unified School District and Mixed Studies Curriculum Master Teacher.

[Applause]

And we will begin with a short presentation from Professor Armando Vazquez speaking on how this campaign got started.

>> Yeah, I'll speak from here. I feel like a bishop today. As the priest said, buenas tardes, good afternoon. And even though the crowd has thinned out, remember that this is being broadcast worldwide. And our presentation really is for the purpose of promoting what has been now almost a two year campaign to promote ethnic studies.

And that was the reason we proposed this panel, because it is more than 45 years since ethnic studies programs were created throughout the United States, back in the late 60's. But it is a shame that our public school systems to date still does not teach about ethnic studies. And this is a challenge that we have, not only here in California but throughout the United States. The purpose of this panel is to continue to promote how we can institutionalize the teaching of ethnic studies in the K-12 public school system. I will continue later on with a presentation on the Long Beach Model, which is the program that I have now been able to lead between Cal State Long Beach and the Long Beach Unified School District. And I would like to give the opportunity to begin with a presentation by the El Rancho Unified School District, because they are historic, first school district in California. The past, with their own authority, with their own leadership, their own school board action a requirement. But I will let them explain to you how they came about with that policy and what they have done since then. After that I'm going to show you a documentary that was prepared for this very purpose. We're premiering today a documentary on the Long Beach Ethnic Studies Program. Directed and produced by one of my assistants, one of my students, a dreamer whose with us today and I'll introduce her later [inaudible]. But let me turn the mic over now to Aurora Villon and Tino Gutierrez from El Rancho Unified School District.

[Speaking Spanish]

>> First of all, I want to thank Dr. Enrique Murillo and President Morales, LEAD Summit Leadership, for giving the El Rancho Unified School District [speaking Spanish] the opportunity to tell our story. We are story tellers. We're here to tell you the on June 17th, 2014, we started the ethnic studies revolution. It's a good revolution to have. In 2013 I and my colleague, Jose Lara were elected to the school board. When we took our oath of office we were determined that we would be -- that we would work with our fellow board members, our superintendent who was recently hired at that time, Mr. Elindo [phonetic] whose in the audience with us. With our fairly new cabinet, our union brothers and sisters and our community. And that we would transform the El Rancho Unified School District into a district that would be second to none. At that point we realized and I think we'll be hearing this message all day, that in order for us to transform the lives of children, in order for us to teach their mind, we have to touch their spirit. And we cannot do that if we do not acknowledge who they are, where they come from, what is important to them. Their parents, their culture. Our children cannot be invisible children. And for us, the passing of a resolution of ethnic studies was common sense. We didn't realize when we passed the resolution that we would be making history, because for us, it was common sense that we did that. After we passed the resolution, we received called from all over the United States. Some of them were very bad, emails saying "how dare you". Other people applauding us. But you know, we're determined. We're determined to let the needs and voices of the children guide us instead of policies and status quo. So what we did, we passed the resolution. Thank you.

[Applause]

We passed the resolution, but we knew that if our [Spanish] was to take root, a resolution was to take root, our ethnic studies, that it had to be first of all planted by the board of education and the superintendent. But it had to be watered and taken care of by the teachers. We were determined that it was not going to be a top-down approach. That the board would not tell teachers what to teach and how to teach. And that we would not force anyone to teach ethnic studies. So what we did, we called a meeting and we asked teachers, "how many of you would like to teach an ethnic studies course?" How many of you would like to have the freedom to develop your own curriculum, to teach your own course, to make history? To be the pioneers of something that is happening in our nation that is going to impact not only our state, our district, our state our nation and the world. Twenty teachers volunteered. Out of the 20 teachers, 12 of them, 12 or 15, Tino can correct me if I'm wrong because he has more of those details, decided to write a proposal. My guidance, the kinds of courses they were interested in teaching and you'll hear a little bit about that later. We would determine that our children could not wait, that our teachers could not wait, that if we were going to pass a resolution, we had to teach a class. So we passed the resolution June 2014. The class of 2015 had to be a graduation requirement, ethnic studies. So teachers had a lot of work to do. They wrote a proposal, they submitted their proposals. They wrote their curriculum, they submitted their curriculum, got all of their classes A through G approved. And this is in a matter of less than a year, that they were able to do that. We are so enthused by the transformation that has taken place. Recently our teachers presented, in fact last Friday at the CADA Conference. And the way they describe their involvement in the ethnic study courses, they describe it as a labor of love. They talk about how they as teachers for many years, wanted to be given the freedom to teach a course that touched their spirit. And when you have, when you're touching students spirit and you're touching teachers spirit, great and amazing things can happen. And they are happening in El Rancho Unified School District. But let me tell you something, after we passed the resolution, 20 other districts in the state of California have passed a similar resolution. There are some districts that are fighting the resolution a little bit, because a lot of people think that ethnic studies is only the teaching of Chicanismo or Black history or women's history. And although all of those classes are important, ethnic studies is the teaching about human beings and how they interact and how they learn to understand each other. And if you are familiar with common core and you're familiar with what is expected of a 21st century student, then we know you know, anyone that objects to ethnic studies, ask them the question, ask them to define to you what a 21st century student looks like. I had a reporter who called me who was very upset that we had passed this resolution. How dare you, you're going to separate people. Why do you do this? So I started talking to her and I said, "Do you understand education?" She says, "Yes I do." I said, "Do you understand common core?" She says, "Yes I do." I said, "Do you understand what educations calling for nowadays?" She says, "Yes I do." I said, "Explain to me, if a student is to be prepared for a 21st century, define that, what does that look like? What might that student be able to do?" She say, "Well, I imagine they need to read and write, right?" Got it. "I imagine they need to know about technology." Got it. What else do they need to do? And she said, "Well, you know, our students are international now, there's no borders." And I said, "What must they do?" "They must be able to understand other cultures and speak other languages." Got it.

That is ethnic studies. We need to let people know that ethnic studies is not a separate curriculum, it's not something that you add on, it's part of the curriculum as the math and the English and the science and everything else. And I can tell you that when we call on teachers, teachers from all departments. This is not class at El Rancho Unified School District that is being taught by social studies teachers only. We have social studies, English, math, health teachers, PE teachers. We are transforming the way things are done in education. In all those districts who have passed this resolution, one thing is to pass the resolution. Another thing is for board members to support their teachers, to push the agenda and sometimes get out of the way. Because the teachers are going to transform how things are done and we need to be there to support them. But we cannot be board members and leaders and be playing it safe. We did not get to the positions that we have to keep the status quo. We need to make the changes that need to be made because every minute that we fail to make decisions, children are impacted. We need to take care of our children and make the decisions that are going to transform their lives. I can tell you that El Rancho Unified School District is focused, determined and intentional about teaching, about changing students' lives and about making our district second to none and we invite you to join us in this revolution that is going to transform the lives of adults, the lives of our children, and the way things are done in education. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>> Okay, I don't know how I'm going to follow that, but here it goes. Alright. Thank you for staying again and thank you for shutting that, now it looks like it's a big crowd. I love that. Alright, so I'll say a little bit more about the process. So I'm [inaudible] teacher, I've been teaching at El Rancho High School for seven years. I've been with the district on and off since 99. And I'm a good teacher union member. So when we hear something coming from the board immediately we are like, okay, what are they making us do now? So I have to temper that suspicion with a little bit of neutrality. And we did that and when they came to us and they said, "what have you always wanted to teach?" Well, you don't ask someone who went to USCB and was part of [inaudible] activist, what I have I always wanted to teach. I know what I've always wanted to teach. I just didn't think I was going to hear it from a board member, from the superintendent, from the assistant superintendent. So we did, we were there at that meeting and of course my colleagues in the social studies department was very suspicious, what are they going to make us teach? And they explained that really they wanted us ethnic studies to be something broader than just social studies. And it can encompass other disciplines, other departments at our school. And so we all wrote proposals. Some of the proposals that were written were brilliant, it showed the passion. We thought about that one class at college that just changed our minds. For me it taking a class with Cedric Robinson [assumed spelling] on Black Marxism which I was talking earlier about. So we thought about what moved us when we were in college and we started to write proposals. Now, I'm a strong believer in the built environment. You can't build a house on a bad structure, on a bad foundation. And again, to the credit of both my principal, Jessica Kwek, at El Rancho High School. Our superintendent, the board and the district, they have been investing in the last three years in a number of things. First, project based

learning. A lot of PBL workshops, project based learning. AVID, a lot of AVID strategies, we're trying to go AVID school wide. So a lot of us already have some acknowledgement on AVID, AVID strategies. And technology. We are a, sometimes a BYOD school, Bring Your Own Device. When I taught my students, when I was teaching U.S. history I would tell them, "Take out your cell phone" and they would be like, "Ugh, he's going to put us to work." So, we were very pro and we are very pro-technology. So that foundation was set, so when ethnic studies came in and we wrote our proposals, we had a good foundation. And I recognize and I think we all recognize that this sort of relationship between the board and teachers and the district and our admin, is very rare. But it's not impossible. Like any good relationship it just takes really good communication and there was that. So, some of the classes that were created, so when the classes were created we had to write our proposals, we had a committee that we started and the committee would then say yes or no to the proposals. And if they said yes to your proposals then you then got onto this website that helped you build this class and make it A through G requirement. We had the counselor at the college and career center help us with the A through G requirement. And a number of courses were written. Some of the courses that we offered in case you're thinking about how can I work this in our school district -- we already had AP Human Geography in the book, so that counted. We had Mexican-American Heritage, that's our class that we have at our school, that counted as well. So some of the classes were already there. We've also had anthropology in the past, which I hope we have again, because that's my specialty. So those counted. But apart from that, the classes that were created, were a multicultural literature, which is co-taught by two of my colleagues. Examining culture diversity and gender through literature and film, which is a really, really interesting class. And then I wrote one called, From Hooverville's to Ferguson, a history of social movements in the U.S. which I haven't taught yet, I'm going to teach it soon here so. But, and then, this year some of the proposals that were accepted were one call Self-Empowerment and Women's Health, which actually was proposed a time before but then that teacher decided to not move forward with it. She is both a health teacher and a PE teacher and a women's health class at a high school is just a really, really important class. California Native American History, which a colleague of mine is -- hopefully, she'll let me help her in that class because that's something I'm very interested in. And then I am proposing another one I'm writing right now, Cultures of California. I am also a special education teacher and even special education students have to take, just what everyone is, they have access to everything else. They have to take this requirement to graduate. I'm writing a course that I can frame and I can structure and teach to students who receive special education services. So those are the courses that are -- now we want to expand those courses in the years to come. And it's really interesting being the first school to mandate. Now props to the schools in the Bay area and the other schools that have already offered ethnic studies courses. Those are those shoulders that we're on. But we're the first district to mandate it and we're hoping that that's something that will continue. As [inaudible] said, "it's not enough to be the first". I think what's really important for a lot of us as teachers is knowing that we're helping students to not only get to know who they are themselves, but we're giving them the tools to be successful in life, in the global economy. We're helping them to write the narrative of this country. Because right now the narrative of this country is not looking

too good, it's getting -- there's this very interesting nativist narrative that's emerging or re-emerging lately. So, hopefully with ethnic studies it's a timely thing, it's something that our kids can take with them, our students can take with them to wherever they go after they graduate. And really empower them, give them those tools that they need to succeed. And give them those tools like deeper thinking, analytical thinking. And as a teacher I never thought I would actually get a chance to do what I'm passionate for. That's a very rare thing and I recognize that and I really appreciate that. And that's what we always are there, we offer ourselves to any school district that might want to talk to us about how they did it and how we did it, how to help them get through, we're always there for them.

>> Thank you. Thank you. [applause] Before we continue I believe I saw Dr. Flores [assumed spelling] walk into the building, Dr. Flores are you still here? Okay, I wanted to give a shoutout to our school board member -- at San Bernardino Unified School District we as San Bernardino Unified School District have taken this upon us ourselves and we will be offering ethnic studies next year. But I want to say it was because of the support of the parents and the support of Dr. Flores.

[Applause]

We will continue now with Professor Armando Vazquez has a video on the LEAD Summit.

>> Yes, before I introduce the video. Is it ready Bob? Can you give me a signal if you have it setup to go? Okay. Let me just say a couple of things. This panel is to share with you two models. The model that has been presented, I would call an internal model with a full community power of a board, exercising their authority, as El Rancho has done. And as many other school districts have now done and also as the example here in San Bernardino. That's to create within what should have happened already. The other model that I'm here to present is a collaboration, I would call this, The Higher Education Model. A collaboration between a college or a university that offers ethnic studies with a local school district. And this is the case of the Long Beach ethnic studies program that came about last summer. This is what I will share with you today, the case of a school district that defines its own ethnic studies curriculum or in the case of the model in Long Beach, which is a contractual relationship for college credit courses that are offered to high school kids. And this is what the documentary I'm going to present to you will describe. We are offering this to you in anywhere USA because we know that there are ethnic studies programs throughout the United States, not only in California. In the case of the Long Beach Unified, we were successful in securing the commitment by the school district to contract approximately \$10,000 per course. Not one, 12 ethnic studies classes, every semester for the next five years. That was a commitment of about a million and a half by the Long Beach Unified School District superintendent. Yes [applause] I say let's praise that because the school district was not necessarily always going along with it. There was resistance. But I think the benefit is that it demonstrates where there is money today in school districts where they can invest it, as it has already been talked about earlier today. So, let me ask Bob to present the tutorial, the

documentary and then it will give us a chance to have more of a conversation about the different paths of these two models that we would like to share with you today. Bob, if you could -- there we go.

[Music In Foreign Language]

>> During the summer of 2014, the first ethnic studies class with Cal State Long Beach credit was offered at Carson High School as a four week introduction to Chicano and Latino studies course. This was the first opportunity that Professor Armando Vazquez-Ramos had to teach an ethics study high school class. Which inspired the concept of Saturday college model.

>> Because of the content I was teaching at Carson High School and there was again, the first time that at Carson High School to had a Chicano Studies Class being taught. And I jumped at the opportunity because I saw the potential to develop college credit courses in high schools. And of course last summer was when also El Rancho Unified School Board passed their own resolution, their own requirement that all El Rancho graduates will be required to have at least one ethnic studies class.

>> Based upon the teaching experience gained by Professor Vazquez-Ramos during the summer 2014 class taught a Carson High School, he partnered with El Rancho Unified to create a similar class during the 2015 spring semester, taught on Saturdays at El Rancho High School.

>> We're here at El Rancho High School where I just finished teaching the first session in my Chicano and Latino Studies class, which is a historic moment because this is the first time that this class has been taught with college credit to 35+ El Rancho High School students. And I'm really glad that we're here at this campus, which is a historical landmark in itself. It has been the site of many generations of Mexican, American and Chicano community graduates that have gone onto great things. And I look forward to a semester of much success, certainly this morning's session was just a phenomenal experience and it seems like all the students are really energized to be here at El Rancho High School.

>> Based upon the El Rancho middle, Professor Vazquez-Ramos drafted a concept paper to propose his Saturday college course for Cal State Long Beach credit for underachieving black and Latino high school male students at the February 2015 Long Beach My Brother's Keeper Summit.

[Music]

He personally delivered the concept paper to the Long Beach mayor, Robert Garcia, and Long Beach Unified School Board president, Felton Williams. And proposed to the My Brothers Keepers Summit for consideration as a deterrent for minority male dropouts.

[Music]

Professor Vazquez-Ramos' opinion editorial led to the publication of a featured new article by the Long Beach Press-Telegram on his Saturday college model proposal to Long Beach Unified. This generated great interest in garnered broad attention from the school district and the community. Simultaneously this idea was also proposed on campus by Professor Vazquez-Ramos to the Ethnic Studies Departments and College of Liberal Arts at Cal State Long Beach. But ironically, the concept was received with some degree of skepticism, dismissive attitudes, and outright rejection as an unrealistic proposition. However, superintendent Steinhauser was amazingly responsive to the idea of the proposed Saturday college model, I was extremely positive. But at the same time he was challenging and deliberate when he proposed to literally make a 1.2 million dollar commitment for funding of 12 classes per semester for five years if the program could begin by September 2015. Superintendent Steinhauser's commitment and challenge began a four month quest from May to September 2015, to introduce the project initiative by the ethnic studies department, to the Cal State Long Beach College of Liberal Arts and how the program could be launched through the campus college of continuing and professional education, with the provost and presidents approval. As administrative coordinator for the project, Professor Vazquez-Ramos and the Cal State Long Beach Ethnic Studies chairs had to one, initiate a process to develop the curriculum for a single course that would become the cornerstone for several classes to be offered during the five year commitment. Two, identify faculty for the initial 12 classes to be offered by September 2015. Number three, produce a uniform syllabus and reader for the course, U.S. Diversity and the Ethnic Experience, as the foundation class for the Long Beach Ethnic Studies Program Model. While there may have been some degree of resistance at the beginning of the program, entire campus apparatus was extremely cooperative and responsive to the school districts commitment and challenge. To it, even Cal State Long Beach president Jane Conoley expressed amazement and highly complimented all involved the Long Beach Ethnic Studies Program.

>> So I'm really proud of all that's been accomplished so far. I understand it's been a terrific launch and I'm not sure I'm exactly right about this, but I think that I was told that Armando would know, that all this came together in less than four months of planning, is that right?

>> Yes.

>> Well if you know the university, nothing happens in four months. Four years is more likely what it takes for us to do so, I'm very impressed and again delighted that the launch was so very successful and we're off to such a strong start. So, thanks very much for being here today and I know you'll have a wonderful day and go Long Beach! Thank you.

>> Perhaps the most important reflection of the programs potential was the tremendous response by close to 2000 parents and students that attended a six campus orientation

for class registration, held respectively at each high school prior to the beginning of classes in August of 2015. Given the success and high demand for the Long Beach Unified Ethnic Studies classes, superintendent Steinhauser has increased funding to offer 16 classes per semester and to make available summer classes beginning in 2016.

>> We are now looking at the second semester for individuals who will take what I'm going to call, Level One of a specific. Maybe it's Asian studies or Chicano studies, and we're looking at that. When I was at one of the schools just recently, I love my students, they said, "Well Mr. Steinhauser, don't we get first priority in a level two class since we're already at level one? Don't we get the first priority?" I said, "That's a great question, I don't know." So that's one of our tasks that we had to figure out. That tells me the high interest that's out there for everybody to take it. And I have a student advisory committee that I meet with four times a year and I just met with them, same thing. They said, "You know what, we love these ethnic studies courses, we want you, Mr. Steinhauser, to give us more courses so that we can take more college credits and expand our horizon." And as Dr. Conoley said, this is a huge opportunity for all of us to study our past, to study the present and to study the future. Because in America we have a problem, sometimes we don't always present things in an unbiased manner, let's just call it that. And so what the beautiful part of this program is that we are all studying the great tapestry of our nation and we're really looking at what's good, what's not good, and how we can make it better. If you turn around and look at each other, you are the tapestry of America. You are the future of America. And you know what? I tell everybody, America is in great hands. You folks are going to make this even a better nation than it is, because you understand what it means to be inclusive, you understand what it means to save our environment, you understand what it means to be thoughtful, you understand what it means to look at the whole picture and not my small piece of the world. And that's something that we have to work for. So you have the boards promise, you have my promise and I know you have the universities promise because this gentleman here will make sure of it. Because he makes sure of me. That we are going to do whatever we can to expand this program and to truly make this a model for the rest of the state as well as the nation.

>> I personally really loved the course because personally, I am Mexican and in my classes I've never really felt like I was really taught anything of my culture, anything in regard that I could relate to. So, while in the class I was actually able to learn more about me as a person, where my ancestors came from and how intersectional basically all minority groups are.

>> I loved the class. Personally, it's a great way to socialize with people. Going into this class I was kind of shy, like, I wasn't open to other people's cultures. I was really like, trying to learn about mine a little bit more. But, you know, having Anna teach me it was just, open -- like it opened my mind. It broadened my perspective on other people's cultures.

>> Personally, I like love it because I like to learn about history and that's like my total interest and like, being able to have more than just what we get in the classroom, because it's just the basic information. And being able to like learn more about what they're doing and how it affected the people, because we don't ever get that and so it just adds to it.

>> The class is actually more amazing than I ever thought at first. At first I thought we were going to just learn about religion, cultures and all. But like, you know, we're actually learning more. We're learning like, what's about them. Like, the other four groups. Asian, Native American, Hispanics, and African Americans, like there is so much that we're all related to them. Like, that makes me more shocked that I could -- just because we're a different race and all doesn't mean like, we're really different. We are always [inaudible]

>> I think I learned that we should take ethnicities more into consideration and we should start at an earlier age. Because I would have loved to learn this when I was younger. You know, like, more in depth of what happened like, in history classes, we skim through stuff. Like we don't, it's mostly like American's like white people, that we learn about. And it's not like, you never see like, oh we focused on Guatemalan's or you know, something like that. So I think it was really cool knowing that like, there's so much more out there than what we learned in just a regular curriculum in high school.

>> Undoubtedly the Long Beach Ethnic Studies Program will become a national model for other school districts to implement based on the pioneering and visionary leadership of the Long Beach Unified School District.

[Music]

>> Okay, I believe we have time for one question. Any questions? No? Do we have any social media questions?

>> I do have a question.

>> Oh, you do? I'm sorry.

[Inaudible]

>> But we need our audience online to listen to you, so thank you.

>> Anyway, I [inaudible] this wonderful lady and we have been trying to do this. We keep talking to our superintendent, we've talked to the union, we're trying to do it at Atlanta. But obviously I think we're getting to that point now where we're going to need advocacies to come in and help us. I have been in the school district for seven years, you would think that I would have more power! But it's something that we need. It's something that when I was young we fought for and I hate to see it going to waste. It is so important for our students to know where they come from, to know where they

belong and to know what the struggles are to make them better people. So, any advice? Any help? I need it. My name is Barbara Chavez, School board from Fontana.

>> And we remember you. [laughter] Thank you for joining us again. You know, I think that we've come across that where, school board members are resistant to making decisions that are in the best interest of students. And what I can advise you to do at that point is that if you have parents that are involved, if you have activists in your community, invite them to the board meetings. Because when it comes to the education of our children, you cannot leave decisions to five board members who are not making the right decisions. They need to be reminded that -- we need to be reminded that we are elected officials and that we are there as servants of our community. And that children need what's best for them. So invite your activists, invite your parents, invite those people in your community who can be the voice for the children. Invite your children, your students, your university students, to come to the board meetings. Pack up the board meetings with as many people as possible. When we passed the resolution it was packed with students, most of them were university students crying. Saying, "we wish we had had this opportunity when we were in high school". And just to wrap it up, I would like to say one last thing. You know, something that bothers me a lot, as an educator, as a parent, as a woman of color, is the labels that we place on our students. You know, when we talk about children of color we talk about deficient underprivileged, troubled, hostile, different. Imagine if we changed that to great, beautiful, gifted, talented, thoughtful, responsible, loving, inquisitive, playful, sociable. Please start changing the terminology when we address children of color, because we are wonderful people and we need to remind our children every day that they are wonderful and they are bringing cultural capital into our schools. The best of who they are. Thank you.

>> Thank you. And that is all for today. And as we conclude, I would like to make a challenge. A challenge for all of us, for our next steps. Our next steps just like Dr. Villon said, now to search for those leaders, so-called leaders in our district that are there for status quo, but are there to change and to lead because I promise you, they are present. The Dr. Flores' of your district are there, the Dr. Villon's are there. Let's search for them and let's continue on this revolution. Thank you. [applause]

END – 00:46:22