

December 21, 2020

Dear ARTLC Members,

On December 16, 2020, Senator McCrory and Luz Osuba, Designee for Representative Sanchez, along with CSDE and SERC representatives, held a listening session with members of the Anti-Racist Teaching and Learning Collective (ARTLC). ARTLC representatives included scholars from SCSU, UCONN, Yale, and Teach for America-CT; organizers from the City-Wide Youth Coalition, Hearing Youth Voices, and Students for Educational Justice; and students from Hearing Youth Voices, Students for Educational Justice, and UCONN.

This meeting was a follow-up to the ARTLC blog post on October 13, 2020 and letter presented on November 4, 2020 to the Co-Chairs of the Education Committee and the SERC Team. The ARTLC shared their vision and advocacy for the legislated African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino course of studies, and expressed their perception and concerns about the direction of the curriculum prepared for its implementation.

SERC shared that the efforts to develop the curriculum was the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including students and members of the ARTLC, and specifically recognized the expertise and extensive contributions of Content Development Committee members for its comprehensiveness.

During the meeting, the ARTLC identified the following critical components that Senator McCrory and the SERC Team agreed with. References and examples provided demonstrate how these components served as the foundation for the curriculum development process.

- 1) The curriculum not only focuses on the histories untold, but how their absence has perpetuated the stratification of power and social construction of race and racism.
 - Refer to knowledge and skills for each unit.
 - Examples:
 - Semester 1, Unit 1, Lesson 1.1 African Origins
 - Semester 2, Unit 3, Lesson 3-1.4 Race in Latin America: Caste or Social Hierarchy

- 2) The course centers on students' identity development and includes in-depth analysis of our collective history in relation to current context in order to liberate our youth.
 - Refer to critical consciousness and performance assessments for each unit.
 - Examples:
 - Semester 1, Unit 5, Lesson 5.3 The Empowerment of Black People Through the Arts
 - Semester 2, Unit 1, Lesson 1.2 Hispanic vs. Latino Labels

- 3) The curriculum utilizes an inquiry-based approach as outlined in learning objectives and essential questions, which serve as framework for course.
 - Refer to scope and sequence.
 - Refer to student inquiries/compelling questions, recommended learning activities, home links, and extension/experiential activities for each unit.
 - Examples:
 - Semester 1, Unit 6, Lesson 6.3 Black Cultural Production
 - Semester 2, Unit 4, Lesson 4.4-2 When You Try to Change Me, I End Up Changing You

- 4) The course provides students opportunities to engage in contextualization and personalization of content to inform actions, including anti-racist leadership, in their own communities.
 - Refer to project-based activities and student choice in each unit.
 - Examples:
 - Semester 1, Unit 6, Lesson 6.4 Systemic Racism (1965-Present)
 - Semester 2, Unit 5, Lesson 5.6 Latino Challenges in the U.S. Immigration Stories From the Border

- 5) The curriculum reflects integration of concepts across units and semesters to demonstrate the positive contributions of African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino people and how they have worked together to create change.
 - Refer to themes from focus groups, scope and sequence, and documentary.
 - Examples:
 - Semester 1, Unit 5, Lesson 5.5 Resistance and Revolution Through Organized Efforts
 - Semester 2, Unit 4, Lesson 4.3-1 Latino Resistance in the U.S.

- 6) The professional learning provided for this course should be differentiated to support teachers in their role as anti-racist leaders, and how to customize lessons based on students' perspectives in the communities in which they serve.
 - Refer to draft of proposed professional learning plan.

- 7) The professional learning provided for this course should include educators already teaching courses like this and engage teachers in collaborative lesson design to support ongoing curriculum development.
 - Refer to draft of proposed professional learning plan and archived district informational session.

As a result of this meeting, SERC agreed to the following:

- 1) Continue to include youth perspective and voice in development of curriculum (e.g., themes garnered from student surveys and focus groups, student feedback before/during/after participation in pilot lessons, student involvement in racial equity leadership activities) and recommend the CSDE include youth in the evolution of curriculum and course implementation (e.g., professional learning activities, field study, inter-district partnerships).

- 2) Review curriculum materials being presented to the CSDE in December and the Education Committee in January to strengthen the articulation and messaging of the seven components outlined above.
- 3) Continue to partner with the CSDE to support districts in their development of pathways of learning around this course and in relation to their 'portrait of a graduate'.
- 4) Continue to include and engage students and members of the ARTLC in Advisory Group efforts and make the ARTLC aware of request for proposal opportunities for field study and professional learning.
- 5) Make members of the team available for a follow-up meeting with representatives of the ARTLC in late January.

Senator McCrory affirmed the high quality of the curriculum and the need for extensive professional development to deliver, while noting appreciation for the honest and direct feedback from students and the ARTLC. Senator McCrory also expressed the desire for continued partnership of SERC with the CSDE to support the implementation of the course as envisioned, designed, and highlighted above.

SERC, to the extent possible, as delineated by the legislation, anticipates continued collaboration with the ARTLC and appreciates their advocacy for anti-racist pedagogy, curriculum, and practice, including this legislated course. We will await to hear from our designated ARTLC contact, Rashanda McCollum, to support the scheduling of the January meeting. In the meantime, if any member of the ARTLC should have additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the SERC Team listed below.

Sincerely,

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^[1] "The State Education Resource Center shall develop a black and Latino studies course. Such course shall be one credit and offered at the high school level. In developing such course, the State Education Resource Center may utilize existing and appropriate public or private materials, personnel and other resources, including, but not limited to, persons and organizations with subject matter expertise in African-American, black, Puerto Rican or Latino studies, and the curriculum materials made available."