

Teaching our history of racism is uncomfortable. It doesn't square with our ideal of equal justice for all, or that we're all created equal. Teaching this history, the ability to recognize racist acts, ideas and policies, and to formulate corresponding anti-racist acts, ideas and policies, is key to eradicating racism. Without ARCA's mandatory standards, teaching this history and these skills will continue to be avoided, enabling systemic racism.

ARCA will: a) establish a shared knowledge base, b) demonstrate contradictions between our ideals and our reality, and c) teach recognition of racist policies, ideas and acts and the formulation of corresponding anti-racist policies, ideas and acts. Racism acts almost invisibly at times, even with benign intent, but infects our institutions and society nonetheless. We all suffer from racial biases to varying extents. Racial indifference and "color blindness" enable systemic racism. Anti-racist teaching will enable identification and deconstruction of systemic racism. Germany mandates Holocaust curriculum, so it won't happen again. Rwanda mandates a four-part education and reconciliation program, so genocide won't happen again.

While HB 2845 mandated K-12 standards on the "histories, contributions and perspectives of ethnic . . . and social minorities" that "promote critical thinking regarding the interaction between systemic social structures and ethnic . . . or social minority status," the Ethnic Studies Act does not mention race or racism, nor teaching anti-racist skills, nor does it specifically require such curriculum.