



Senate Bill 210: Research Summary

Examining Strategies, Evidence, and Outcomes of Place-Based Education Practices

Sobel (2004) - Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities (SEER report synthesis).

- Evidence base: cross-site review of schools using the environment/community as an integrating context for instruction (EIC).
- Reported outcomes: higher standardized test performance across subjects; improved engagement indicators (attendance, discipline). Example metrics include disciplinary referrals declining from 560 to 160 to 50 over three years after EIC expansion at one school; 54% fewer suspensions and 11% higher attendance reported in other sites.
- Interpretation: place-based, service-learning oriented instruction is associated with improvements in both academic performance and school engagement.

Carjuzaa & Ruff (2016) - American Indian English Language Learners: Misunderstood and Under-Served (review).

- Problem: an 'invisible' subgroup of American Indian/Alaska Native students may speak English at home but lack academic English proficiency; they can be missed by conventional ELL identification that assumes immigrant second-language learners.
- Implication: misidentification can lead to insufficient language supports, foreclosing access to core content and widening achievement gaps.
- Policy/practice recommendations: broaden CLD/ELL frameworks to include home/community language varieties; ensure classroom-level supports and staff capacity in rural/small districts with limited ESL specialist access.

Kisker, Lipka, Adams et al. (2012) - Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) randomized controlled trial (Alaska, Grade 2).

- Design: randomized controlled trial testing two culturally based, reform-oriented modules co-developed with Yup'ik Elders (Picking Berries; Going to Egg Island).



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin
Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION

- Main effects: statistically significant improvements in mathematics performance with effect sizes of 0.82 SD (Picking Berries) and 0.39 SD (Going to Egg Island). Alaska Native student subgroup effects reported as 1.00 SD and 0.33 SD, respectively.
- Relevance: provides rigorous evidence that culturally grounded math modules can raise achievement and narrow gaps without requiring students to 'leave culture at the door'.

Dee & Penner (2017) - The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum (San Francisco, Grade 9).

- Design: fuzzy regression discontinuity (assignment based on an eighth-grade GPA threshold).
- Estimated impacts: +21 percentage points attendance; +1.4 GPA points; +23 credits earned in ninth grade for students assigned to ethnic studies.
- Interpretation: culturally relevant, identity-affirming coursework can produce large, causal gains in near-term engagement and credit accumulation among at-risk students.

Bonilla, Dee & Penner (2021) - Ethnic Studies Increases Longer-Run Academic Engagement and Attainment (follow-up to SFUSD program).

- Design: longer-run analysis of the same ethnic studies intervention using the assignment mechanism as an identification strategy.
- Reported outcomes: increased high school completion and postsecondary enrollment for participating cohorts, consistent with persistence mechanisms implied by ninth-grade attendance and credit gains.
- Relevance: suggests short-run engagement gains can translate into improved attainment.

Lunda et al. (2024) - Supporting the Cultural Identity Development of Indigenous Youth (Alaska Indigenous educators' community-of-practice).

- Context: teacher representation gap in Alaska (less than 5% Indigenous teachers vs nearly 20% Indigenous students).
- Findings: practices supporting cultural identity development include teaching/using local Indigenous language, situating instruction in cultural stories/oral narratives, land-based



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin
Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION

learning, emphasizing cultural values, and 'micro cultural validations' in daily interactions.

- Implication: provides practice-level guidance for supporting identity and belonging even when teachers and students do not share cultural background.

Olson (2023) - Teachers Like Us (FutureEd synthesis on educator diversity).

- Synthesis finding: multiple studies associate teacher-student racial/ethnic match with improved attendance, reduced exclusionary discipline, and higher long-run outcomes (graduation and college enrollment).
- Example effect sizes reported in the synthesis include +9 percentage points high school graduation and +6 points college enrollment for Black students with at least one Black teacher in early grades; other studies report roughly 10% increases in long-run outcomes for Black/Latino students with same-race teachers.
- Policy focus: pipeline and retention strategies (grow-your-own, residencies, scholarships/loan relief, licensure supports) to reduce representation gaps.

Blazar (2021) - Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes (random assignment of teachers).

- Design: experimental evidence from random assignment of teachers to classrooms in Grades 4-5.
- Reported outcomes: students assigned to teachers of color show higher achievement and improved behavioral/engagement measures; mechanisms include more frequent culturally responsive teaching practices and relationship-building.
- Implication: teacher diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy can be complementary levers for student outcomes.

Assembly of Alaska Native Educators (1998; updated 2022) - Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.

- Purpose: statewide standards for students, educators, curriculum, schools, and communities to guide culturally responsive practice (non-prescriptive; locally adaptable).



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin
Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION

- Core expectations: integrate heritage language, local culture, and community knowledge as foundational to student development; use local environment/community resources routinely; align school-home expectations through partnerships with parents and Elders.
- Implementation signals: meaningful community involvement in schooling and staffing that reflects the student population.

Wood (2018) - Let Them Be Heard: Bringing Native American Experience Closer in Teaching (Decolonizing pedagogy).

- Problem: mainstream curricula often present Indigenous histories through a Euro-American frame, producing stereotypes and erasure of contemporary Indigenous peoples.
- Framework: A guide for analyzing colonization and centering Indigenous perspectives in curriculum and instruction.
- Practice recommendations: prioritize Indigenous-authored narratives and Indigenous-led digital resources; represent Native peoples as contemporary communities with agency.