

**Response to Special Master Follow-Up Questions re CRPI Director  
January 30, 2015**

**Special Master Request #1: Information about Mr. Lopez's administrative experience and qualifications**

TUSD Response to #1:

None of the five candidates had a degree in instruction, culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum or ethnic cultural studies. On their applications, all candidates indicated they had an advanced degree in educational leadership. One of the candidates also listed a second advanced degree in Teacher and Learning. Mr. Lopez met all minimum job requirements for the Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy position; there was no deviation from the formal requirements. The job description listed several areas of experience required for the position, including experience in instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy, as well as related areas in curriculum and ethnic studies, cultural studies, Mexican American studies, African American studies, urban education, multicultural education, or a related field. No candidates demonstrated experience in all of these areas, but Mr. Lopez has a depth of experience in a majority of these required areas.

Mr. Lopez has a current Arizona Secondary Certificate and an SEI endorsement. He has completed all coursework for an Arizona Administrator Certificate, passed the required AEPA exams, and has started the application process for the administrator certificate. Mr. Lopez has more than three years of program management and/or supervisory experience, as follows: Program Coordinator for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction (*six months*); Program Coordinator 21st Century CCLC Federal Grant Program @ Cholla High School (*one year*); Administrative Internship and Administrative Designee (*one year*); and Site Coordinator of the Social Justice Education Project @ Cholla High School (*four years*).

Mr. Lopez also has over five years of any combination of teaching experience, administrative/supervisory or program management experience in a multicultural K-12 educational setting. Mr. Lopez has been an employee of the Tucson Unified School District since August of 2000 as a teacher and program coordinator. He has over 14 years in a K-12 educational setting. Based on his resume, published works, and interview responses, Mr. Lopez demonstrated the verbal and written communication skills in English and a demonstrated ability to read and comprehend written/graphic and oral instructions.

See also Attachment A – Letter from Deputy Superintendent Adrian Vega, Ed.D

**Special Master Request #2: Specifics of the courses Mr. Lopez took in pursuit of his master's degree.**

TUSD Response to #2: See Attachment B – Letter from Lorenzo Lopez



OFFICE OF DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT  
TEACHING & LEARNING

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January 30, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Lorenzo Lopez was hired as a Coordinator for the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction Department in the summer of 2014. He was hired because of his extensive knowledge in the area of Mexican American Studies curriculum and his expertise in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Throughout the summer and first semester, Mr. Lopez has assisted Mr. Gabaldon, the Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction, with the development of the current iteration of our Culturally Responsive Curriculum. Mr. Lopez's ability to supervise and lead people in this critical area was evident immediately. His years of classroom instruction in Mexican American Studies and his experience in leading professional development in Culturally Responsive Practices earned him credibility with teachers and principals as he led professional development in the area of Culturally Responsive Practices. These professional development sessions were held bi-weekly and Mr. Lopez was responsible for the support at the secondary level.

It was through the observation of his interactions with teachers and principals that I became aware that he was pursuing his administrative credentials and encouraged him to apply to administrative openings that may arise in the future. Additionally, it was my understanding that Mr. Lopez was instrumental in the development of the Social Justice Education Project, which precipitated the development of the framework that made the Mexican American Studies Classes so successful.

When he interviewed for the position of Director for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction, there was no doubt in my mind that he had the qualifications necessary to lead and supervise the program and that he had a firm understanding of the curriculum development and design process necessary to implement a curriculum of this type.

The majority of curriculum administrators that I have worked with in the past did not necessarily have a Masters in Curriculum. What they did have is a firm understanding of curriculum and instruction coupled with a Masters in Educational Administration, which is essential for leading people. Furthermore, Mr. Lopez is recently coming to this position from the classroom, which gives him a better understanding than most of what curriculum should look like to support the classrooms of today.

It is for the reasons stated above that I am confident that Mr. Lopez has the skills and knowledge necessary to be the Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Vega', is written over a horizontal line.

Adrian Vega, Ed.D  
Deputy Superintendent



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**OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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To whom it may concern:

Re: Qualifications for CR Director- Lorenzo Lopez Jr.

The collection of my professional experiences has provided me with pertinent background to competently execute the duties outlined in the job description for the position of Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction. My professional experiences in conjunction with my graduate degree satisfy the requirements outlined.

My graduate studies have prepared me for an administrative role within the educational system. With a master's degree in Educational Leadership- Principal Certificate, I was trained in, among other things, the areas of curriculum design, supervision of instruction, leadership in instructional planning, and personnel in administration. Additionally, I have taken a curriculum construction course, through which I was required to create a course of study from inception. The process included creation of a course title, course description, scope and sequence, application of standards if applicable, course design, curriculum and assessment development.

In supervision of instruction, the emphasis was to gain a firm understanding of sound instructional practices, observation documentation techniques and the creation of rubrics to evaluate effective instruction. This course required field experience in documentation of several subjects and various methods of taking observation notes. Reflective analysis was crucial to the development of this skill.

Leadership in Instructional Planning was a course in which I was required to create a course. This process began with the creation of a course proposal and justification. Like in the curriculum construction course, it then led to a course title, description, scope and sequence, applicable standards, course design and implementation in the master schedule and finally, curriculum and assessment. The curriculum for the semester was created including course content, activities, literature, calendar, assessments, grading rubric, attendance policy and expectations. This course provides a great understanding of the process of curriculum design and implementation.

Another course that contributes to my preparation for this position is Leadership in Instructional Planning. This course required an evaluative analysis of traditional educational models. The idea was to promote innovative, non-traditional approaches to issues in education. Educational leaders should not aspire to continue with traditional approaches to traditional problems. This course encouraged the development of new solutions to old problems. The goals of this course resonated particularly well with me. The disparities that exist with educational achievement are a problem that we have yet to systemically address as an institution.

Through this process, I gained the foundational and hands-on experience to effectively lead a comprehensive high school. In my estimation, this fulfills the requirement of a Masters degree in curriculum and instruction, as outlined in the job description for the position of Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction.

I underwent an intensive internship process in which I served as an administrator designee when administrators were out. During the internship process, I conducted teacher observations and participated in the teacher evaluation process by providing input. I served as site supervisor for extra-curricular activities

taking place after school. Dealing with issues of student discipline, I mediated resolutions with teacher-student issues. I took a leadership role in the implementation of site policies and professional development opportunities.

In addition to my administrative role as a principal intern, I worked as a quasi-administrator for an academic after school program at the same site. My responsibilities included; teacher observations and evaluations, personnel documentation and payroll preparation, budget management, preparation of federally mandated grant documentation, course evaluation and approval, and student achievement data analysis. In this position, I operated as the administrator in charge of the after school program.

During the first ten years of teaching, I was also a coach. In this capacity, supervised and managed this athletic program and the staff involved. I supervised and evaluated coaching staff on their performance. I conducted mandatory reporting of inventory, budget and resources. I planned and implemented training and development programs throughout the year. I utilized data to evaluate and adjust instruction based on programmatic need.

Although my experiences in administration are limited, my experiences in culturally relevant curriculum development, culturally relevant and critical pedagogy and design of social-justice centered educational programs are extensive.

My first teaching job was as a history teacher for a self-contained program for “at-risk” youth. I began teaching in a bungalow in a remote part of a high school campus in the fall of 2000. The students selected for this program were lacking academic credits for graduation. Many of these students lacked the basic skills to succeed in the traditional classroom environment. It was from this student population that the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) stemmed from.

In the summer of 2002, newly hired University of Arizona professor, Julio Camarota, the recently hired director of TUSD’s Director of Mexican American Studies, Augustin Romero, and I began to plan a Youth Participatory Action Research project for students in my class. Our plan was dependent on the participation of the three entities represented; the university, the district and the classroom. My pedagogical and curricular contributions to this work were instrumental to the success of the program. The premise of the work was based on the idea that the dysfunctional relationship between students of color, primarily Black and Latino, and the educational system was not due to a deficiency on the part of the students. Rather, the educational disparity in achievement illustrated a systemic and endemic problem in our educational system today.

The success of SJEP propelled the work of TUSD’s Mexican American Studies program (MAS) to national prominence within educational circles working with Black and Latino/urban youth. My role in this effort was extensive. Because these were my students, my opinions on pedagogy and curriculum directly impacted the direction of the class. It was my responsibility to align the theoretical musings with the practical applications in the classroom.

The first task was to identify the most important curricular pieces that were essential to the project. Some of these elements included; cultural identity development, critical consciousness development, media analysis, research methods, theoretical foundations, etc. Translating these complex concepts and processes to a state aligned curriculum was a challenge. It was done through pedagogical techniques, engaging activities, culturally relevant curriculum, a respectful and authentic teacher-student relationship, and a personal belief that *our* students could excel within the educational system.

Next, we needed to develop a scope and sequence for the course. This document aligned the state and district standards with the transformational curriculum that was collaboratively developed. The educational model that resulted from this approach served as the foundation of success for the greater MAS program. The development of culturally relevant, social-justice based curriculum and a critical pedagogy was paramount to the academic gains made by the students served by this program.

The educational model that resulted from this was the basis for much scholarship in the field educating urban students of color. This model is highlighted in several books and is called Critically Compassionate Intellectualism (CCI) Model (Romero, Arce, Camarota).

In addition to the work with SJEP, I taught American History from a Mexican American perspective for over a decade. As previously stated, the MAS program was unique in that it fulfilled graduation requirements for students. At that time, all comparable K-8 Ethnic Studies programs in the nation provided elective credit for the courses they offered. The curriculum that I developed in that decade also had to be aligned to state and district standards. Furthermore, it had to be culturally relevant to Mexican American students. As one of the earliest members of this department, I contributed to the creation of this innovative curriculum, helped mold the pedagogical model and served as an exemplar in the creation of a unique educational approach that has since swept across the country. Most recently, the merits of this educational approach were chronicled in the research of the Cabrera/Milem Report.

The curricular and instructional methods developed have served as the mold upon which many school districts across the country are basing their own ethnic studies programs. Much of the curriculum and educational advances were made available via the Institute for Transformative Education. This was a conference hosted by MAS every year.

Through my work with the MAS program, I've had the opportunity to present my contributions in various conferences nationwide. I've listed some of those conferences below:

Institute for Transformative Education: 2006-2010- Presented Topics

Mi Familia/My Family: Ethnographic research as cultural affirmation

Social Justice Education Project: Panel Discussion

Deconstructing the Constitution: An analysis of original intent in the founding documents

Youth Participatory Action Research: SJEP

Chicano Educational Crisis and the Persistent Use of the Deficit Model

(\*Following presentations were in collaboration with Camarota, Romero and/or SJEP)

2004 Congressional Hispanic Caucus: Washington, DC.

Urban Education: SJEP

2005 NACCS: National Association for Chicano and Chicana Studies: Albuquerque, NM.

MAS in K-12 Education

2006 AERA: American Educational Research Association: San Francisco, CA.

Social justice curriculum in education

2007 AERA: American Educational Research Association: Chicago, IL.

YPAR: SJEP

2010 Equity Alliance: Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum: Phoenix, AZ

Post-Racial education in the Age of Obama

In the summer of 2014, I was hired as CRC (Culturally Relevant Curriculum) Program Coordinator. In this role, I've been instrumental in the development of curricular documents outlining the direction of the CRPI as well as the district as a whole. I've developed curriculum maps for the district implementation of courses titled, Culturally Relevant American History- Mexican American Viewpoint, Culturally Relevant American History- African American Viewpoint, CR Government- Mexican American Viewpoint, and have contributed to various others.

As part of the infusion of culturally relevant and culturally responsive strategies into the greater curriculum, I have developed and provided professional development training to district administrators. These PD trainings have been provided to all K-12 site administrators and curriculum facilitators in the areas of English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

With my unique experience, I've developed a professional development series for teachers currently teaching culturally relevant courses for the District. This PD series is an introduction to the theoretical foundations of work comprising culturally relevant education. It's based on the classic works from the fields of multicultural education, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, decolonizing/libratory education, as well as more contemporary works on barrio pedagogy, culturally sustaining education and indigenous epistemology as a pedagogical approach to education. The PD session follows a continuum of consciousness for educators that is based on the cognitive scaffolding used in the classroom. Development of this critical consciousness and the pedagogical approach to replicate the success of the MAS program are the most time consuming and challenging aspects of this work.

I've developed procedural protocols for the district in student registration. This policy adjustment was due to the institutional barriers that the students had to overcome in order to take a culturally relevant course. Most of these protocols are now implemented during the student registration process.

Furthermore, I've written the CRPI Action Plan for the 2015-2016 school year, proposing a drastic but necessary overhaul of the current CR model. This plan includes evaluative tools I've developed to monitor the impact of these types of courses, CR expansion plans for K-12 implementation with fidelity to the work, instructional monitoring to ensure pedagogical and curricular quality, professional development for continued growth and innovation, resources and instructional materials necessary to provide a transformational learning experience.

Most recently, I've supervised the collection of compliance documentation for the District's most recent notice of non-compliance from the Arizona Department of Education. I've collaborated with central administration and site administration to accurately inform CR teachers of what is expected.

Through the collection of life experiences, I feel confident that I am more than qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of this position. As stated above, I have demonstrated the necessary skills to excel in the position of Director of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction. Furthermore, I feel the District would be hard pressed to find a more qualified candidate in the field of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction.

Respectfully,

Lorenzo Lopez Jr.