

# EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record

Volume X, Number 24 · March 6, 1991

© 1991 Editorial Projects in Education / \$2.50

8 EDUCATION WEEK · MARCH 6, 1991

## Ellis Island Group Unveils Multicultural Curriculum

By Debra Viadero

WASHINGTON—A national, non-profit group last week unveiled an ambitious multicultural-education program for students nationwide in kindergarten through 12th grade.

The program, known as "Americans All," is an eight-year effort launched by the Coordinating Committee for Ellis Island, a group formed to restore the former immigration processing center in New York Bay and open it as a museum.

It offers a wide variety of resource materials, ranging from essays on the experiences of various ethnic groups in this country to a collection of more than 600 photographs.

Program developers also train teachers to use the materials and provide strategies for involving parents, volunteers, and community groups in multicultural-education efforts.

The program has been tested in schools in San Diego and Chicago and is being introduced in Washington, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Miami, and Dubuque, Iowa.

"What we are trying to do is deal with a problem our liberal, well-intentioned forefathers did not anticipate: In this 'melting pot,' nobody is going to melt," Andrew Young, the former Mayor of Atlanta and civil rights leader, said in announcing the program. "What we are going to have to do is develop a unity that respects that diversity."

The program focuses on six ethnic groups—Native Americans, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans. Materials are also being developed on 50 other ethnic groups.

The project's developers, who include educators, scholars, and business leaders, said their aim is to steer clear of current debates in so-

cial studies over whether the curriculum should be Western-dominated or African-centered.

"We believe the ethnocentric focus has a place in the continuum of education," said Gail C. Christopher, who directs the program with Allen S. Kullen.

"It cannot, however, be the context of education," she said.

Mr. Kullen said the program is meant to supplement existing coursework, particularly in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 where social studies is usually taught. Materials can also be infused throughout the curriculum.

Mr. Kullen said the group hopes to raise \$94 million from business and government sources to put the materials in every school in the country.

Some of the funds, he said, will come from businesses seeking to use the "Americans All" logo for advertising outside of classrooms.