

Public Comment #2 on TFR:
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Should injecting ideology take precedence over academic outcomes in the California Math Framework (CMF)?

Please reject the CMF Third Field Review (TFR) and retain the 2013 CMF.

The CMF's Third Field Review begins by discussing CA students' poor math proficiency, and then claims that this poor performance demands implementation of its ideological and pedagogical proposals, ignoring that its proposals may actually make student proficiency worse.

The same TFR proposals made student proficiency worse at SFUSD, where detracking and equity focused proposals have been implemented since 2014. SFUSD's math program, the TFR's mirror image, has led to decreased student math proficiency and increased inequity. (See SFUSD CAASPP results 2016-17 to 2018-19; see SFUSD at The Research Doesn't Add Up at savemath.net, see FFSF Inequity in Numbers report, see 'Put Algebra 1 back in 8th Grade', Ridgeway, Margulies)

Now that the failure of SFUSD's math program is known, it isn't mentioned in the TFR, though SFUSD did figure prominently in the CMF's First Field Review (FFR). By avoiding mention of SFUSD, the TFR avoids drawing attention to the failure of its own proposals. This tactic isn't surprising, as the TFR continues to propose implementing these same failed proposals for all of CA's almost 6 million public school children.

Even the evidence the TFR does put forward to support its signature detracking proposal, from which so many of its other proposals stem, is compromised. The key supporting study in the TFR, known as 'The Railside Study,' has been heavily critiqued and some would say, discredited. Further, its lead author, a writer of the CMF, hasn't responded to requests to share data, to permit independent verification of its results.

Another key detracking paper cited in the TFR, 'Raising Expectations...' 2021, is an unpublished, non peer reviewed, scantily detailed paper, which one commentator called 'a blog post' (see @mikeandallie tweets).

The one study the TFR cites that shows detracking student benefit, is misrepresented, by shading discussion of the study's findings to emphasize just the detracking portion of the multifaceted intervention, presumably because it is a study of 8th grade Algebra acceleration for all, which the TFR discourages.

'The Railside Study' and the 'Raising Expectations...' papers claim that detracking leads to student academic benefit, but neither can reliably support that conclusion. SFUSD's results certainly do not support it.

Detracking is the core TFR go-to proposal, from which other proposals stem, such as heterogeneous (differing student math level) classrooms (through 10th grade), the use of 'big ideas' and 'rich' 'open' math tasks to permit multiple entry level points into math tasks to accommodate the different student levels, and the use of 'Complex Instruction', to manage interactions in the heterogeneous classroom. None of these proposals cite solid evidence of improved student academic outcomes. In any case, SFUSD has already implemented all of these proposals as a package, and the result was decreased student math proficiency (See SFUSD CAASPP results 2016-17 to 2018-19), and increased inequity (see 'Put Algebra 1 back in 8th grade', Ridgeway, Margulies).

TFR suggests implementing the same proposals statewide.

Is it because the TFR's ideological commitment to detracking, 'equity', 'equitable outcomes' takes precedence over bettering student academic outcomes? At times, the TFR reads more like a political tract than a math curriculum framework.

For example, the TFR says the CMF's goal is 'equity' (Ch. 1). The TFR's Glossary defines 'equity' as 'fairness, not sameness', but 'fairness' and 'sameness' aren't similarly defined. The 'equity' definition points to a paper, Gutierrez (2012) ("Context Matters..."), and a rubric within the paper, to explain how achieving equity in math education will occur. The 4 dimension rubric, however, is based on Marxist ideological concepts of identity and of power dynamics (see page 20 in "Context Matters..." Gutierrez 2012).

The TFR text is sprinkled throughout with tenets and concepts from Critical Race Theory, like 'equity', 'equitable outcomes,' 'systemic change,' 'systemic issues,' 'examine inequities,' 'structural barriers,' 'structural injustices', 'institutional injustices', 'challenge the status quo', 'social order', 'culture of exclusion', 'inequitable', 'inequities', 'challenge inequities,' 'structural inequities,' 'systemic inequities,' 'historically marginalized', and 'historically underrepresented,' all of which are part of the CRT lexicon, and stem from its core tenet of 'systemic racism'. CRT's contested ideology, derived from Marxism, can be described as

"It (CRT) is a Marxian faith system based on the belief that society is organized by white people for their own benefit through something Critical Race theorists call 'systemic racism.'" (James Lindsay, 'What is Critical Race Theory' Critical Race Theory Workshop, Session 1, (8:22 and onward) - <https://newdiscourses.com>)

'Awakening a "true" racial consciousness that is aware of this (systemic racism) and that unequivocally rejects it (and whiteness itself as its root) is therefore the chief program of Critical Race Theory.' (James Lindsay, 'Race Marxism', New Discourses, pg. 13)

While Critical Race Theory aims to raise a 'racial consciousness'; the TFR promoted pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Teaching, aims to raise a 'critical consciousness'.

According to the Calif Dept. of Education (CDE) (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/culturalrelevantpedagogy.asp>), Culturally Relevant Teaching consists of three components, all of which 'must be utilized', including supporting a students' 'critical consciousness,' which is the ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities. The term, 'Critical consciousness', comes from the Brazilian Marxist Paulo Freire, and is designed to create Marxist political activists by engaging in Marxist thought reform (See 'The Marxification of Education').

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) also makes an appearance in the CMF TFR (Ch. 13). Strands of SEL, such as Transformational SEL, and others, also derive from Marxism, according to New Discourses.

The TFR also includes elements from Gender Ideology, and a section on 'Teaching towards Social Justice'; suggesting both should be incorporated into math curriculum and instruction.

It's not just the prevalence of these ideologies in a proposed math curriculum that's a problem, it's that the TFR favors ideological proposals known to lead to academic failure. And it's also that these ideologies, if implemented in public school, would contravene a number of state and federal laws and Constitutional provisions.

The purpose of a state curriculum framework is to implement state standards, not to inject woke ideologies. Reject the TFR; retain the 2013 CMF.