

Dear California State Board of Education,

I am writing to ask you to REJECT the Mathematics Framework Revised Draft (CMF) proposed for the July 12-13, 2023 meeting. The primary goal of math instruction in TK-12 schools should be students achieving proficiency in mathematics; yet, California students are far from proficient (with nearly 67% of students below proficient in 2021-22 on the CAASPP) (Ch. 2, line 46). On the National exam (NAEP), 77% of 8th graders were BELOW PROFICIENT in 2022 ([link](#)). While not great, proficiency rates were higher before schools were closed during COVID, so what should California do now? While many intervention programs, such as intensive tutoring, have greatly increased proficiency levels, rather than focus on this, the CMF proposes Marxist philosophy now embedded in Critical Theory (brought to the US education system courtesy of Paulo Freire), stating that CA educators need to “reimagine mathematics” (Ch 1, line 56). Math educators are told, “*Tasks have been developed to help students read and write the world with mathematics. First, students read the world by learning to use mathematics to highlight inequities. They then write the world—in other words, they learn to change it with mathematics.*” (Ch 2, Line 608). This is the exact language of Paulo Freire (who was a Marxist and sought to embed Marxist concepts into education through what he terms “critical pedagogy”), which should not be in our mathematics classrooms!

The CMF has “five components of classroom instruction that can meet the needs of diverse students: plan teaching around big ideas; use open, engaging tasks; **teach toward social justice**; invite student questions and conjectures; and center reasoning and justification.” (Ch 1 Line 333 and Ch 10, Line 62)). So, one of the five ways to help our struggling Black or African American students (who are currently 16% proficient) and Hispanic or Latino Students (currently 21% proficient) is NOT by focusing on mastering math content standards, but by teaching towards “Social Justice?” One must wonder, isn't the “Socially Just” thing to do for these students to help them develop proficiency in math content standards so they can advance economically in society?

What is the stated goal of the CMF? Proficiency in math content standards? Growth for all students? No- in addition to the CMF wanting us to “reimagine mathematics”, the authors “require systemic change” in order to get “equitable outcomes” (Ch 2 Line 99). The goal of equitable outcomes is listed numerous places (e.g., Ch 1 Line 802, Ch. 2 line 106) as a reason for systemic change. But should equitable outcomes really be the goal? Since when are equitable outcomes even realistic? Nearly every parent who has more than one child will tell you that they cannot achieve “equitable outcomes” with their own children raised in the same home with the same resources and values. Since when is it not okay for some students to excel in some areas and others to excel in different areas? If California truly wants equitable outcomes, then we will have lost all our advantage as a society based upon merit; our professional basketball teams will no longer be primarily made up of black athletes who are the best, but rather will be equitable to all races and genders. Is this what we want? No! We want equal access and even, at times, unequal support in that students struggling the most (regardless of ethnicity) get MORE support to the end that they increase in proficiency, not that all our students achieve the same.

The CMF describes what “Teaching for Social Justice” looks like in many places throughout the 14 chapters. While the CMF does NOT EVEN ONCE list all of the math content standards, it does find time to tell teachers their vision of math education, which is essentially Marxist Education (which should NOT be allowed in California Public Schools):

- Provide “Access to an engaging and humanizing education—a socio-cultural, human endeavor—is a universal right” (Ch 1, line 265). Note that while “humanizing” is not here defined, it typically derives from the meaning given in Marxist philosophy, meaning Humanizing can mean any step taken in which man is the creator of things, or simply realizes that he is the creator of things, history, society, himself, rather than nature, or god, or outside forces, capitalism, or other.
- Have students ask, “What problems do you see in our community that we might analyze?” (Ch 1 line 680). “Problematizing” is yet another aspect of Critical Theory derived from Marxist philosophy.
- “Teaching toward social justice urges educators to empower learners with tools to examine inequities and address important issues in their lives and communities through mathematics.” (Ch 2 line 462). Again, the goal to train students to seek out inequities derives from Marxism via its offshoot, Critical Theory. This is stated again in Ch 2, (Line 57): “Empowering students with tools to examine inequities and address important issues in their lives and communities.” This also comes up again in Chapter 2 line 615, “Mathematics educators committed to social justice work provide curricular examples that equip students with a toolkit and mindset to identify and combat inequities with mathematics.”
- *“Culturally relevant pedagogy. A theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that they and others in their lives have experienced (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). It is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It rests on three criteria: (a) students must experience academic success, (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995b).” (Ch 14 Line 99)*
- “Culturally sustaining pedagogy also supports students to critique and question dominant power structures in societies.” (Ch 14 line 123)
- “Learning is not just a matter of gaining new knowledge—it is also about growth and identity development.” (Ch 2 line 479). If our students are failing math, why are math teachers now focused on identity rather than math?
- “Teaching in culturally responsive ways that acknowledge and draw on students’ backgrounds, histories, and funds of knowledge enable students to feel a sense of belonging.” (Ch 2 line 507). So a math teacher’s job is to help students feel like they “belong”?

- “In this second aspect of teaching for social justice, teachers use mathematics to analyze and discuss issues of fairness and justice.” (Ch 2 line 569). Isn’t this MATH class, not Ethics class? And this quote is NOT just for older students, but TK- 12. Who gets to decide what constitutes “justice”? It is clear the focus on the CMF is not on mathematics
- “Data related to issues can draw not only from a range of mathematical ideas and student curiosities but also from a range of feelings about relevant, complex issues. A focus on complex feelings aligns with trauma-informed pedagogy, which highlights the importance of allowing students to identify and express their feelings as part of mathematics sense-making, and to allow students to address what they learn about their world by suggesting recommendations and taking action (Kokka, 2019).” (Ch 2 Line 598) Is this what most parents think a math teacher is or should be doing? How much math is being learned in this classroom?
- The CMF states that “teachers and students interrogate social positionings of who does mathematics.” (Ch 2 line 647). Don’t we want ALL students to do mathematics? When learning a formula or procedure, has anyone questioned “What race or gender was the person who came up with this?” No!!! Math is objective and math is correct because the math proves itself, not because of the identity of who said it. The CMF sticks with this theme saying, “Teachers can share with students examples of successful people within the field that highlight gender and racial diversity.” (Ch 5 line 1416). The goal of math teachers should be to have their students learn MATH; it matters not who first discovered it or wrote it down; it matters that it helps us make sense of and power our world. Again the CMF states, “Mathematics and mathematics methods classes that explore mathematics, and the teaching and learning of mathematics, from many cultures. By taking the time to acknowledge and center contributions to mathematical understanding from Africa, South America, Asia, and indigenous peoples around the world, educators can ensure that students can better appreciate the global nature of mathematical discovery. In a similar way, prospective teachers in methods courses can expand their understanding of teaching and learning mathematics by exploring a variety of approaches from a diverse array of cultures.” (Ch 10 line 274). So if math teachers just point out that contributions to math come from different areas of the world, students will gain proficiency? No! Students need instruction in math content to grow in math proficiency.
- “Mathematics education has a long history of inequitable access to rich learning (see chapters 1, 2, and 9 for more discussion of this topic). It is incumbent on all in education, at state, county, district, site, and departmental levels, to work together to create, adapt, and implement professional learning experiences designed to help teachers challenge and overcome the legacy practices that continue to perpetuate these inequities in access and attainment. Even when professional learning is designed with a different primary focus (mathematical practices, particular instructional routines, or teaching big ideas, for instance), its implementation should be relevant to students’ cultural backgrounds and existing funds of knowledge. It should also include awareness of and attention to the impacts of unconscious bias on students’ experiences in the mathematics classroom.” (Ch 10 line 115). What “legacy practices” is this referring to

and what evidence is there of these practices (other than the fact that some ethnic and socio economic groups don't perform as well as others)? Which teachers have this "unconscious bias" and what evidence is there that it exists?

- **"Chapter 3** focuses on fostering healthy, equitable, and inclusive digital communities, including infusing social and emotional learning (SEL) and cultivating educator and student well-being. By emphasizing SEL and well-being, schools can create virtual learning environments that are safe and inclusive and that support equitable student outcomes." (Ch 11 line 435) Is the CMF suggesting the reason some students are not proficient is because teachers have not infused enough "social and emotional learning" rather than the fact that many students don't know their multiplication facts by middle school?
- Teachers should have "**A collaborative classroom culture** where students and teachers are partners in learning." (Ch 12 line 144). Is this what parents are sending their students to school for? To get a "partner" in learning?

The CMF gives "reasons" that apparently CA students needs all the aforementioned indoctrination in Critical Theory/Marxist education during their math class:

- "Both mathematics educators and mathematics education researchers argue that teaching toward social justice can play an important role in shifting students' perspectives on mathematics as well as their sense of belonging as mathematics thinkers." (Ch 2 line 454) Where is the evidence that "teaching towards social justice" improves student math proficiency, which is what might lead students to actually advance in society.
- "Teachers can begin with awareness that mathematics plays a role in the power structures and privileges that exist within our society and can support action and positive change." (Ch 2 line 491). What "power structures" are being referred to? What privileges? These terms are tenets of the contested political and legal "critical Race Theory". What evidence is there that math plays a role in this undefined power structure, and if math does lead to "privilege", then let's devote resources to tutoring and intervention to help our struggling students get to that level of "privilege" rather than teach students to seek out problems and inequities to make note of.
- "Making sense of data, being able to identify data that are misleading, and using data to make decisions are all important skills for students in their roles as **global citizens**" (Ch 5 line 34). Our students are NOT GLOBAL Citizens- we have no global government and, as such, we can not be citizens of the globe. This is supposed to be a MATH Framework for California Students, who last time I checked, are citizens (or hoping to be) of the United States of America.
- "Equity cannot be an afterthought to more traditional content-centered offerings that do nothing to address the fact that "Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, and poor students, have experienced long histories of underrepresentation in mathematics and mathematics-related domains" (Martin, 2019; see also Martin, Anderson, and Shah, 2017)." (Ch 10 line 128). First, why wouldn't math content be the answer to students not learning math? Secondly, how can the CMF lump all of one race or gender together?

Black students from Nigeria, for example, far exceed white students in math achievement.

- “Inequities caused by systemic issues have resulted in a “culture of exclusion” that persists even in equity-oriented teaching (Louie, 2017).” (Ch 10 Line 132). The CMF is now telling us even if teachers focus on equity, there will still be a culture of exclusion. So what is their answer? Just focus on equity anyway? Why not tell the authors of the CMF to focus on math content instruction and proven interventions that help all struggling students reach levels of proficiency rather than spouting lines straight from CriticalRace Theory?
- “Additionally, administrators must acknowledge the inequities often perpetuated through traditional assessment strategies in the mathematics classroom and how these assessment approaches can be re-envisioned.” (Ch 10 line 843). So now the CMF is telling us that the assessments are the cause for differences in test scores of different ethnic groups? Where is the evidence for this claim? What does “re-envisioning” assessment mean? According to the CMF chapter on assessment, that means not giving letter grades and focusing on growth OVER performance (Ch 1 Line 845). How will this prepare our students for the real world in which performance matters?

With all this focus on training students to find inequities, it's very ironic that when the CMF proposes tables of “Big Ideas” in math for students to learn and they list math content standard numbers next to those, they FORGOT to include grade 6 standard EE 8, where students actually learn the MATH of writing inequalities! So the CMF is more concerned that students spend time in math class problematizing and finding inequities in the world than they are that students learn to write and solve linear inequalities, something used in all STEM majors and careers. This is unacceptable. We need a CA Math Framework focused on MATH CONTENT, not on turning California into Marxist education system.