

September 30, 2020

RE: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Line Item Edits

Dear Chair Iniguez and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your continued efforts to create an ethnic studies curriculum that will serve as a model not only to California school districts but to the nation at this critical time. As a follow-up to PACCCRAS's letter on the importance of civic engagement to ensure students apply the content knowledge acquired to practice taking informed civic action, we offer line item edits to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that:

- Encourage partnership and consultation with community stakeholders, who may be more knowledgeable about the histories and lived experiences of certain racial/ethnic groups, in the development of local ethnic studies curriculum to promote greater connection to current local dynamics with these communities
- Convert passive language to active language to encourage student agency
- Add specific recommendations for student action projects within some of the sample lessons
- Direct students to research and understand root causes of an issue through its historical context as a basis for action
- Insert an initial sample lesson in Appendix B, taken from SFUSD's course outline featuring YPAR (Youth Participatory Action Research) in Appendix A, to connect current issues with its historical past. This sample lesson should be used as a foundation to augment other content-based sample lessons as a culminating unit or lesson, to promote student action.
- Add a Civic Engagement Resources section in Appendix C to share the CDE Resources to Support Civic Engagement to ensure that ethnic studies is both an academic historical analysis and an applied course for current student civic engagement

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum should provide clear, articulated goals and guiding principles while being accessible to all teachers and schools that want to teach ethnic studies, particularly those doing so for the first time. Thus, general guidance should be streamlined for easy accessibility for new and/or busy teachers and administrators to quickly understand the purpose/goals/objectives of ethnic studies and take comfort that those are built into all model lessons and resources, and provide deeper insight in unfamiliar topics and newly needed skills. There should be a clear arc to frame the ESMC goals/objectives to (1) affirm a student's identity as an individual and as part of a group through student self-directed research and (2) expose all students to counter narratives of historically marginalized populations with the goal of combating racism and other forms of hate, and (3) equip students with the tools and opportunities to practice taking informed civic action to support their communities and address systemic inequities.

We believe our proposed edits are helpful to engage students to practice taking student civic action to strengthen and extend the purpose of ethnic studies. However, our proposed edits are not comprehensive. We encourage the state to edit the Model Curriculum for clarity and conciseness in its articulation of ethnic studies course purpose/objectives while ensuring rigor, cohesion, and demonstration of those course objectives in its sample lessons and resources and selection of course outlines to spotlight.

Sincerely,

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