

## Letter for Public Comment

### California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum



Linda Darling-Hammond  
California State Board of Education  
1430 N Street, Room 1101  
Sacramento, California 95814

January 20, 2021



We, the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly), American Jewish Committee (AJC), Hindu American Foundation (HAF), Korean American Coalition (KAC), and the Korean American organization FACE (Faith and Community Empowerment), write to thank the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) for provisionally implementing the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) recommendations approved by the IQC in November of 2020.



Over the past year and a half, our coalition has advocated for an ESMC which gives high school students an opportunity to learn about the role that ethnicity, race and religion play in the lives of all its citizens – including those parts of the community previously ignored by traditional curricula. We were pleased to see a more inclusive approach in the third draft of the curriculum. We urge that the State Board of Education (SBE) retain these essential modifications so that the curriculum will reflect California's rich ethnic diversity which includes, but is not limited to Sikhs, Hindus, Koreans, Assyrians, Armenians, and Jewish Americans.



We support the ESMC effort to address the historic and present-day experience of African American, Asian American, Chicano and Latino, and Native Americans. Such education would be a necessity at any time, given the major roles these communities play in both California and US history. But it is especially so given the past and ongoing experience of these groups with systemic racism and marginalization, including in mainstream high school curricula. That said, we believe that incorporating these issues into the ESMC should not come at the expense of, and by marginalizing, other ethnic groups. We urge that these diverse narratives remain as a central part of the curriculum,

and that ethnic groups be included with proportionality and balance as California and Federal laws and the State Board of Education's Content Standards and ESMC Guidelines require.

Our coalition has also advocated for an ESMC which promotes a more balanced approach to ethnic studies, reminding teachers to introduce students to multiple perspectives; teach them to think critically; and encourage students to form their own opinions based on fact.

We continue to support the removal of ESMC content that is unbalanced and inaccurate, pushes religious and sectarian doctrine, supports division, demonization, and discrimination, and promotes illegal, violent, and subversive people, organizations, and action. This would ensure that the curriculum is consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility and the law.

This Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum has come a long way over the past year and a half. We urge you to ignore those who would wish to devolve this curriculum into a previous version or advocate for divisive and one-sided additions, putting this entire project at risk.

Our country is at an inflection point where we can either come together or face continued polarization. We thank you for your efforts as California sets the example for how education can ensure a more pluralistic and multicultural America.

Respectfully,



Rabbi Serena Eisenberg  
Director, AJC Northern California



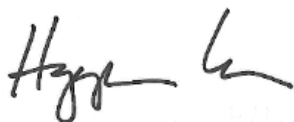
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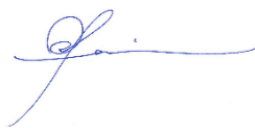
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