

From: Dorothy Battenfeld
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 7:52 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Robin Oliver
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Re: Proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

I currently serve as University Liaison to the California Association of IB World Schools. I live in Santa Rosa, taught high school social science and English for over 30 years, and worked as an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Coordinator. I taught in Denmark and Norway as a Fulbright Scholar. I am also the President of the Board of Trustees of Santa Rosa Junior College.

I fully support the integration of Ethnic Studies into the K-12 curriculum for all students. We need actionable policies to create more inclusive, equitable and anti-racist communities. Elementary, secondary and higher education institutions all need to prioritize curriculum changes, including Ethnic Studies, as part of this effort to support success for all students.

I appreciate the strong emphasis on pedagogy in the ESMC. This mirrors the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) "approaches to teaching and learning" which requires that schools explicitly implement pedagogy that enables students to "learn how to learn", has an inclusive global/multicultural approach, is committed to equity, and promotes open-mindedness and intercultural understanding.

Both the emphasis on the four foundational disciplines and the flexibility in how schools/districts implement the curriculum is appreciated. While some schools may choose to adopt separate Ethnic Studies courses, many schools, including IB schools, will want to integrate Ethnic Studies into ELA and History courses. IB courses already include components of the ESMC. Much of the ESMS is considered essential to all IB courses, not only Literature and History, but the Arts, World Languages and STEM. For example, IB History of the Americas already integrates study of the four foundational disciplines into the course. I would recommend that not just U.S. history and literature, but global and hemispheric lessons be included to give a broader understanding. For example, IB History of the Americas includes a unit on Mexican independence and the Mexican Revolution to better understand Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x history in the U.S. Another unit is a comparative study (using primary source documents) of the Black Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

I support the emphasis on unique local history. I always found students were more engaged in the study of Japanese incarceration when they studied local Sonoma county history; how Japanese were forced into prison camps, but also how some of the local Jewish farmers maintained and took care of their land for them until they were released.

There should be clear accountability so that all students receive a strong foundation in the basic concepts of Ethnic Studies. Districts with predominantly white students need Ethnic Studies just as much as more diverse districts. We saw the results of white superiority and racism on full display in D.C. on January 6. (I am not an advocate of standardized testing as an accountability measure.)

Accountability measures need to come with adequate funding and resources for schools and teachers.

My main concern with the proposed ESMC is the emphasis on the Grade 9-12 curriculum. So much of what students learn and internalize happens in the early grades, and this is when a Eurocentric approach

is introduced. For example, it is difficult to engage high school students in an accurate and full study of Indigenous peoples when their early grade school teachers emphasized the false and racist mythology of Thanksgiving. I would favor giving much more attention and support to the early grades if the aims in the ESMS are to be achieved.

Thank you for your important work. Please let me know if there is an opportunity to provide further information or feedback, or for further dialogue.

Regards,

Dorothy

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California Association of IB World Schools