

**The California Department of Education received 28 submissions containing the language below. Other identical comments may have been posted separately.**

**From:** Rukhsana Arastu  
**Sent:** Monday, February 22, 2021 10:55 AM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

State Board of Education  
c/o California Department of Education  
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division  
1430 N Street, Suite 3207  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
February 22, 2021

Dear State Board of Education,

My name is Rukhsana Arastu. I am grateful to the California Department of Education (CDE) for its strong Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft, and its ongoing commitment to offer coursework in Ethnic Studies for California's students. In doing so, the CDE recognizes the enduring significance of race in American life, the ethical grounds of critical race theory, the necessity of offering curricula relevant to communities of color, and the critical importance of studying the ways ordinary people work towards equity, dignity, and justice. In expanding access to the critical frameworks that Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) offers, the CDE creates space for students to engage in pedagogies oriented towards building a more just world and a better future.

However, I am troubled by the fact that the sample curriculum dated January 21, 2021, that focuses on the rich history of South Asian-Americans, excludes the history of Pakistani-Americans and Bangladeshi-Americans. Immigrants from this part of the world import decades of unique history, language and traditions for its ethnic Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi, Pathan, and Bengali populations that began migrating to the United States half a century ago. The earliest recorded migrations occurred in 1899 when Punjabi workers came from what was then known as North-Western India (present-day Pakistan) for work in California, Oregon, and Washington. Migrants included those skilled in irrigation and others who worked on the railroads. **As of 2015 there were 453,000 Pakistani immigrants, and their families residing in the US; with the largest numbers living in the states of New York, Texas and California.**

Pakistani and Bangladeshi-American children pursuing K-12 education in California must be given the opportunity to connect to ethnic heroes and important public figures who helped fight in social justice movements that aimed to establish an equitable and democratic society. The model lesson plans have been drafted by credentialed teachers in the state of California and reviewed by doctoral scholars for accuracy and completeness. I strongly urge you to accept the submission of the sample lesson plans and to incorporate them in the approved lesson plans for South Asian ethnic history.

"Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies" is an indispensable asset to the teaching of Ethnic Studies. I join local, statewide, and national organizations in support of the final approval of the ESMC; with the addition of the Pakistani-American and Bangladeshi-American lesson plans to

the AAPI Unit and to the ESMC in general. With these additions, I believe California students will soon experience a curriculum that better represents the diversity of our community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rukhsana Arastu PhD