



August 13, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

Equality California would like to express deep concerns about the current draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). It has come to our attention that the proposed model contains inaccuracies, misrepresentations, and omissions that would counteract its intended purpose of promoting inclusion and alleviating prejudice.

For 20 years, Equality California has led the Golden State's fight for full LGBTQ equality. We bring the voices of LGBTQ people and allies to institutions of power in California and across the United States, striving to create a world that is healthy, just, and fully equal for all LGBTQ people. We advance civil rights and social justice by inspiring, advocating, and mobilizing through an inclusive movement that works tirelessly on behalf of those we serve.

One of Equality California's main priorities is ensuring that LGBTQ young people grow up in safe and supportive learning environments, in part by advocating for inclusive school curriculums. We fear that the current draft of the ESMC excludes much of the American-Jewish experience, ignores anti-Semitism, and perpetuates anti-Semitic stereotypes. We cannot support a curriculum that fails to address a community that has been, and continues to be, marginalized, underrepresented, and attacked. Instead of teaching students the rich and complex history of California, this curriculum will exclude the achievements and resilience of the Jewish community.

We recognize the critical value of ethnic studies and hope to work with the Instructional Quality Commission and our allies to shape a curriculum that is fair, accurate, inclusive, and respectful of all people, including historically marginalized groups. The ESMC, as proposed, does not encompass these values. For these reasons, we strongly urge you review, and make serious adjustments to, the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Sincerely,

Rick Zbur
Executive Director
Equality California

CC: The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Jamie Callahan, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director of the California State Board of Education
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President of the California State Board of Education
Dr. Stephanie Gregson, Director, Instructional Quality Commission, and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Performance, Planning & Technology Branch
Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Teaching & Learning Support Branch

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