

August 11, 2020

Dear Committee Members,

As a Jewish lesbian educator in the San Francisco Unified School District for the past 24 years, I'm keenly aware of the essential value and role that Ethnic Studies plays, both as a discipline and source of content, in preparing us all, as individuals; communities; and societies, to better understand ourselves and each other, our cultures and our societies, enabling us to act within and upon the complex world in which we live. While Ethnic Studies as a domain requires a broad scope, its content must be focused, specific and nuanced: defined and designed by experts with both lived experience and academic/pedagogical knowledge. Ethnic Studies, conceived and supported in this way, implemented K—University, by expertly taught and highly skilled educators holds enormous power and promise for individual self actualization and collective actions toward social justice!

While the original configuration of the model meets the criteria necessary for truly transformational curriculum, the second draft strips away the very components essential to its successful implementation, leaving in its place a generalized curriculum doomed to failure by lacking both the intent and methods of the discipline and the deeply nuanced knowledge identified and articulated by members of the ethnic communities at the center of the curriculum.

I'm writing today to beseech you to return to the original writers and draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum as a starting point for any future revisions. Feedback from the original writers must be included in any future revisions and any future drafts must maintain inclusion of those ethnic groups specified in the original draft—Arab American and Pacific Islander studies among them.

Thank you for your consideration. Your actions at this juncture will tangibly effect the lives of all Californians.

Laurie Wager
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