

From: WILLIAM GOODSON

Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2020 1:29 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] request revisions to the ethnic studies curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission and Board of Education,

As a grandparent, I urge you to make major corrections to the Introduction and Overview section of draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

The proposed curriculum seems to have been written to a specific political agenda, and it provides a narrow perspective.

It will be much more constructive - and thus much more beneficial to California - to focus on how to identify lack of empathy and unwanted behavior than to make inflammatory and only partially accurate statements.

I paste below a selection from the proposed Guiding Values and Principles and inset comments on why they are inaccurate or inflammatory.

My concern is that the goal of a model curriculum is not to repeat incorrect allegations. Instead the goal of any curriculum should be to **guide future actions in such a way that the child - and future citizen - feels that empathetic and fair treatment of others is the right thing to do** rather than behavior accepted as the result of coercion. **Change will happen only when everyone believes the same thing about the value of other people.** Overbroad assertions do not have a place in the education process.

Specific observations:

"These are the guiding values and principles each Ethnic Studies lesson should include. Ethnic Studies courses, teaching, and learning will:

1. cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity^[1], self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and people of color;
2. celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth;
3. center and place high value on the pre-colonial, ancestral knowledge^[2] of Native people/s and people of color that is typically marginalized in society;

4. critique empire-building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism^[3] and other forms of power and oppression **EMPIRE BUILDING IN HISTORY INVOLVES MANY GROUPS BESIDES WHITES. THEREFORE LINKING EMPIRE-BUILDING SPECIFICALLY TO WHITE SUPREMACY IS INACCURATE AND THE HISTORY OF GROUP INTERACTIONS CANNOT BE REDUCED TO WHITE SUPREMACY. FOR EXAMPLE, AMONG THE "PRE-COLONIAL" NATIVE PEOPLE MENTIONED IN #3 ABOVE, THERE WAS RAMPANT EMPIRE-BUILDING BY THE MAYANS AND AZTECS INCLUDING HUMAN SACRIFICE AND CANNIBALISM OF THE VANQUISHED. CHINESE AND JAPANESE HAVE REPEATEDLY ATTEMPTED TO BUILD EMPIRES AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHER. THE MONGOLS PRACTICED EMPIRE BUILDING ACROSS ALL OF CENTRAL ASIA AND ATTEMPTED TO BUILD THEIR EMPIRE INTO EUROPE. ISLAM BUILT AN EMPIRE FROM ANATOLIA, AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN TO THE IBERIAN PENINSULA. NONE OF THESE GROUPS - MAYANS, AZTECS JAPANESE, CHINESE, MONGOLS, OR ARABS - WERE "WHITE" IN THE SENSE OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT. THUS, THIS SECTION SHOULD TO CORRECTED TO REFLECT THE BROAD IMPACT OF ALL EMPIRE BUILDING - OR, BETTER YET, IT SHOULD BE DELETED BECAUSE BY BEING SEVERELY SELECTIVE AND LIMITED IN ITS PERSPECTIVE IT IS INCORRECT AND UNNECESSARILY INFLAMMATORY.**
5. challenge imperialist/colonial^[4] beliefs and practices on multiple levels^[5] **THE FOOTNOTE EQUATES "IMPERIALISTIC/ COLONIAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES" TO "PARTIARCHY, CISHETEROPATHY, CAPITALISM, ABELISM, ANTHROPOCENTRISM ... [THAT EXISTS IN A FORM THAT IS] HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGICAL, INSTITUTIONAL, INTERPERSONAL, AND INTERNALIZED." THE ATTACK ON CAPITALISM IS CLEARLY POLITICAL. IT IS UNCLEAR HOW ABANDONING A FOCUS ON THE VALUE OF HUMANS IS RELEVANT TO ETHNIC RELATIONS. AND EMBRACING ANY CURRICULUM WILL OF NECESSITY BE INSTITUTIONAL, INTERNALIZED, AND INTERPERSONAL. THIS SECTION IS**

UNNECESSARY, ILLOGICAL, AND MAKES POLITICAL ASSERTIONS THAT DO NOT BELONG IN A STATE CURRICULUM.

6. connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on the global and local levels to ensure a truer democracy; and **THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONS DOES NOT HAVE EITHER THE MANDATE OR THE AUTHORITY TO URGE STUDENTS TO "CONNECT OURSELVES TO PAST AND CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS" SUCH AN ASSERTION BORDERS ON INCITING TO RIOT. THAT IS NOT THE ROLE OF ANY PUBLICLY FUNDED INSTITUTION. IF THE WRITERS WISH TO SUPPORT A SPECIFIC KIND OF CHANGE, THEY SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND ADDRESS THEIR OBJECTIVES IN OPEN POLITICAL DIALOG. THAT IS HOW THINGS ARE CHANGED IN A DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, NOT BY WORDS INSERTED INTO A DOCUMENT WITHOUT DISCUSSION.**
7. conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for post-imperial life that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.^{[\[6\]](#)} **THE USE OF THE TERM "POST-IMPERIAL LIFE" INTRODUCES A POLITICAL AGENDA THAT DOES NOT BELONG HERE**

Thank you for considering my comments,

Sincerely,

Wm Goodson

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