

**From:** ERMNZ  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 7:12 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ESMC feedback

January 20 2021

RE: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for California

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to share my thoughts on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

I appreciate the history and the struggles that have brought about the desire for the ESMC. Without doubt many people who are ethnic minorities from a variety of cultures have had traumatic, painful and unjust experiences during their lives in the past and now. This truth demands our attention and action to improve the lived experiences of our richly diverse communities, neighbors, and families.

I can see the excellent intentions and direction that much of the ESMC takes. However, I fail to see the current cultural context within the whole country taken into account within the aspirational goals of this model curriculum.

The country is polarized across every aspect of community life: politics, education, religion, and, increasingly, race. I find it difficult to believe that the vast majority of classes are led by teachers who are aware of and set aside their own opinions and biases in order to establish and maintain a "reflective classroom." I applaud the encouragement toward such classroom environments, but I doubt that such a goal is realistic in the current cultural environment.

The curriculum features many words and ideas that reflect an underlying allegiance to Critical Race Theory and antiracism. These viewpoints leave little room for genuine, sincere, unbiased discussion in nearly every educational setting in the country. They pit majority and minority cultures against each other with the only successful and allowable conclusion being active agreement with the tenants of these theories.

Such beliefs and viewpoints should be included in classroom discussions, but their core assertions often preclude any disagreement with their positions. The charge of racism and multiracial whiteness are the answer to any disagreement or attempt to debate these viewpoints. That is not conducive to the democratic, genuine, inclusive and exploratory classroom environment that the ESMC aspires to.

Including teacher guidance on how to avoid the biases that may exist in them due the current ideologies concerning race would be helpful in preparing teachers to actually create and encourage self-examination and open discussion about difficult topics inherent in ethnic histories.

Sincerely,  
Erin Reeves-McMillan