



Center for Empowering Refugees & Immigrants

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

January 21, 2021

Dear State Board of Education,

The Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI) is a nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California with a mission to improve the social, emotional, psychological, economic, and physical health of refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia affected by war, torture, genocide or other forms of extreme trauma.

Founded in 2005 by a group of bilingual/bicultural mental health professionals, CERI provides culturally-relevant mental health and other social services. We are dedicated to transforming the lives of refugees and immigrants and their families, many of whom suffer from weakening intergenerational relationships, layers of complex needs, and exposure to violence and trauma both in their current environments and in their native countries.

The Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants supports the Asian Pacific Islander School Board Members Association (APISBMA) request for revisions to the final draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) to be presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) in March 2021.

The desired revisions which are focused on usability, accessibility, and equity are as follows:

1. The "Asian Americans and the Model Minority Myth" Lesson, Sample Lesson #31 in Appendix A, should be listed as the first sample lesson in the AAPI unit and be rewritten to remove stereotypes and to incorporate reflection based on analyzing data.
2. Language should be added to Chapter 3: Instructional Guidance for K-12 Education to frame "Asian Americans and the Model Minority Myth" as a foundational lesson to the AAPI Unit and as an indispensable component of any Ethnic Studies course.
3. In the AAPI Unit, the pan-Asian lesson plans should be listed first, followed by one lesson plan per ethnic group in alphabetical order, and concluding with an additional resources section for groups with more than one lesson plan. Groups with more than one lesson plan should provide input on which lesson plan is foundational for their group.
4. Appendix A should be reclassified as "Chapter 4" in the ESMC and "Chapter 4: Bibliography" should be reclassified as "Chapter 5: Bibliography" Appendices A and B (formerly Appendices B and C). The lesson plans must be highlighted as core content for educators to build Ethnic Studies courses, not as supporting content in an Appendix.



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As service providers and advocates for Southeast Asian Americans, we are excited that there will be a more equitable Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies Unit in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. We are hopeful that future generations of learners will have access to a curriculum that accurately illustrates the experiences of our communities. And we also support APISBMA's recommendations to further increase equity, usability and accessibility.

"Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies" is an indispensable asset to the teaching of Ethnic Studies. We join local, statewide, and national organizations in support of the final approval of the ESMC; with these edits to the AAPI Unit and to the ESMC in general, we believe California students will soon experience a curriculum that better represents the diversity of our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mona Afary, Ph.D.

Mona Afary

mona.afary@cerieastbay.org
Executive Director
Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI)