



September 12, 2020

Dear California Department of Education,

I am writing this letter to bring to your attention to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum in California. While I don't live in California, as a Korean American educator in the U.S., I have attended many workshops and conferences related to Korean Studies in California. And I also learned that the Korean American community in California played a crucial role in shaping the American landscape through its community activities, contributions, and more.

While it's fascinating to see that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum will be a part of the core curriculum, I am deeply concerned that the Korean American Studies have not been included in the curriculum. For instance, we can't discuss the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest without including Korean Americans and the ethnic conflicts that arose during that period and how this contributed to the violence and marginalization of Asian Americans. Korean Americans, including Dr. Sammy Lee and Col. Young Oak Kim, also helped form this country through their actions, bravery, and character. Dr. Lee won Olympic gold for America in 1948 and 1952 and was the first Asian American man. Col. Kim was a U.S. Army officer who became the first Asian American to lead a combat battalion on the field during the Korean War. He was also a World War II hero. His humanitarian efforts also molded the landscape of Los Angeles through the founding of several nonprofits and organizations that help the youth, battered women, and minorities.

I believe that Korean American history and identity should be taught as part of the curriculum because this community played a significant role in California and the country from a macroscopic perspective. An important ethnic studies lesson can include but is not limited to a prominent figure such as Susan Ahn Cuddy, who broke gender and ethnic boundaries and became the first female United States Navy gunnery officer during World War II. She was a lieutenant and helped train pilots to shoot enemies during the war. Susan was also the eldest daughter of Korean independence activist Ahn Chang Ho and Helen Ahn. Ahn and her family are well known in the Korean American community for their independent activities. Ahn Chang Ho lived in California and founded the first organized-Korean American settlement in Riverside in early 1905. The Ahn family house is also located at the University of Southern California campus. Certainly, Ahn Chang Ho and his family occupy a salient place in Korean American and American history and should be included in ethnic studies.

Also, California recognizes Korean Americans through two resolutions. Hangul Day was passed on October 19, 2019, and recognizes Korean Americans as "an integral part of mainstream American society and have made important contributions as Californians in the fields of finance, technology, law, medicine, education, sports, media, the arts, the military, and government, as well as in other areas." On January 13, 2020, California also recognized Korean American Day by passing Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 142. It stated that "with diligence, fortitude, and an enduring belief in the American dream, Korean immigrants have helped to turn emergent areas within the State of



California into thriving and respectable communities while raising their children to be productive Korean Americans."

Based on the examples mentioned above, it's clear that the Korean American community's presence, impact, and history are an essential part of ethnic studies education. The absence of Korean American Studies in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum would ignore a significant part of California's and America's heart and soul. Thus, I strongly propose that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum include Korean American studies in its Asian American studies section. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jiyoung Daniel  
Board Member, IKEN(INTERNATIONAL KOREAN EDUCATORS NETWORK)  
16156 High Tor Drive Hacienda Heights CA 91745  
[www.ikeneducate.org](http://www.ikeneducate.org)  
[jiyoung.daniel@ung.edu](mailto:jiyoung.daniel@ung.edu)  
909-973-0449  
706-867-4553

Name

Organization