

## CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN AFFAIRS

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

### **RE: Public Comment on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum**

Dear members of the State Board of Education –

On behalf of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA), I am writing in support of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), as well as to provide a public comment in order to strengthen the overall Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA&PI) Studies section. I have also provided detailed recommendations per AA&PI Studies sample lesson.

CAPIAA elevates the political, economic, and social issues of Asians American and Pacific Islander communities by contributing to and strengthening how state government addresses the needs, issues, and concerns of the diverse and complex AA&PI communities. AA&PI communities consists of over 50 different ethnic communities and over 100 different spoken languages. One-third of the AA&PI population in the United States (US) reside in California - where 6,762,404 Asian Americans and 155,871 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders<sup>1</sup> call California home.

### **Recommendations to improve Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies section**

AA&PI communities have different migration stories to the United States (US) yet experience similar structural racism. Thus, it is the upmost importance for California's ESMC to introduce and highlight the variation of AA&PI experiences for California's students to learn the diversity and complexity of the AA&PI community. In order to strengthen the AA&PI Studies section of the curriculum, we recommend the following:

- *Move Sample Lesson 31: Asian American and Pacific Islander and the Model Minority Myth* to the front of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies to make it the first sample lesson of this section. This lesson serves as a great comprehensive introduction to AA&PI studies, as well as highlights the diversity of the ethnic communities, languages, cultures, needs and challenges.
- *Include refugee as a key term* – in the Hmong, Vietnamese, and Lao American sample lessons. Pull refugee key term from Lesson 32: Cambodian American – Deportation Breaking Families, pg. 368; line 7808. It is important for students to learn the conditions and impacts refugee communities face before and after they resettle into the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> US Census

- Move Lesson 39: *The Sikh-American Community in California* and Lesson 42: *Arab American Stereotypes in Literature, Film, and Media Pre and Post-9/11* into the Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies section.
- While this ESMC is a great start, it is by no means captures the various experiences of structural racism and the fight for social justice and equity of all Californians.
  - Thus, the ESMC must be updated every couple of years by the California Department of Education (CDE) in order to expand the general curriculum to include the stories and resiliency all AA&PI communities, including Iu-Mien, Bhutanese, Samoan, Tongan, etc.
  - CDE must encourage California's public K-12 school districts to become more knowledgeable of the various AA&PI communities that attend their schools to supplement appropriate curriculum that is not reflected in the model curriculum. For example, West Contra Costa Unified School District has one of the largest Khmu American population and should provide lessons that will teach the Khmu American experience in the city of Richmond, Pinole, and Hercules.

**Detailed recommendations to improve accuracy per sample lesson –**

<b>Sample Lesson 15: Hmong Americans – Community, Struggle, Voice</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
132	2790-2791	Edit in “refugee” as a key term
133	2800	Replace with “What is the Hmong refugee and resettlement experiences into the US?”
135	2851	Instead of “being caught between two worlds” replace with “Face challenges of navigating two worlds”
	2854	Instead of “the frustration they feel not being appreciated for being Hmong” replace with “the frustration they face when they are not recognized or identified as Hmong”
	2865	Instead of “what it is like to be a young Hmong American male” replace with “what has been the general experiences of young Hmong American men”
136	2873-2874	Same recommendation as above to edit question appropriately
	2889	Capitalize “Black”
138	2926	Insert “Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)”
139	2947	Edit to - The rich Hmong culture “includes” embroidery, story “cloths,”
	2950	Insert 37.8%
<b>Sample Lesson 16: Little Manila, Filipino Laborers, and the United Farm Workers (UFW) Movement – no recommended edits</b>		
<b>Sample Lesson 17: Chinese Railroad Workers</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
154	3234	Replace “credit” with “the appropriate historical acknowledgement”

<b>Sample Lesson 18: Historical and Contemporary Experiences of Pacific Islanders in the United States</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
159	3370	Replace “aggregation” with “disaggregation”. The sample curriculum discusses data disaggregation and not data aggregation.
164	3467	Replace “eastern” islands to “western.” It should read, “Germans had influence in the western islands...”
<b>Sample Lesson 19: Vietnamese American Experiences – The Journey of Refugees</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
183	3888	The text should read “...Vietnamese Americans are making to shape the diversity of our America.”
<b>Sample Lesson 20: The Immigrant Experience of Lao Americans</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
196	4175	Recommend the text to read “...and other ethnic communities from Laos...”
<b>Sample Lesson 21: Korean American Experiences and Interethnic relations</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
201	4309	Question: How will students have access to Korean Americans to interview if they do not live in an area with a Korean American population? I recommend that the curriculum provides an alternative – i.e. watching short clips identified by original author of the same curriculum, list a handful of Korean-serving non-profit in California that would be open to doing an interview, or pull from the following sample lessons of Col. Young Oak Kim, Dr. Sammy Lee, etc.
208	4468	The text should read “...the first Asian American to be elected to the California...”
<b>Sample Lesson 22: Col. Young Oak Kim - Sample Lesson 26: Dr. Sammy Lee (1920-2016) – No comment</b>		
<b>Sample Lesson 27: Korean Popular Culture in the United States – recommend the curriculum acknowledges and make an explicit connection of the influence of Black music (R&amp;B and rap) on Korean Popular culture. What will also move this sample lesson towards an Ethnic Studies framework is to connect Korean Pop group BTS’ fanbase organized efforts to successfully fundraise \$1 million for the Black Lives Matter movement.</b>		
<b>Sample Lesson 28: Important Asian American Historical Figures</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
312	6510	Recommend making speech in “costume” <u>optional</u> . If speech is made in costume, there must be strict guidelines to ensure that

		this process does not perpetuate stereotypes and discriminate against Asian Americans.
314	6546	<p>Under “Potential Significant Figures to Cover”– while this list is in no way exhaustive, we recommend including the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow students to identify and choose a local Asian American or Pacific Islander historical figure that has had significant impacts in the local community they reside (i.e. in Sacramento, Lao American advocate, Chanthapeter Liemthongsamout, organized and build the first Lao American temple in Sacramento. He is most likely not in any history books and may not be known by the teacher but a student may be aware and want to highlight this individual), and</li> <li>• Expand the list to be more diverse of Asian American figures by including – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doua Thor</li> <li>• Kaying Yang</li> <li>• Mee Moua</li> <li>• General Vang Pao</li> <li>• Bao Phi</li> <li>• Sarath Suong</li> <li>• Lian Cheun</li> <li>• Phillip De la Cruz</li> <li>• Carlos Bulosan</li> <li>• Dalip Singh Saund</li> <li>• Kala Bagai</li> <li>• Ayub Ommaya</li> <li>• Kalpana Chawla</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Sample Lesson 29: the Japanese American Incarceration Experience</b>		
<b>Page #</b>	<b>Line</b>	<b>Recommended edit</b>
	6667	Replace “incarnation” with “incarceration” or “internment”
<b>Sample Lesson 30: Indian American Diaspora, Myths of the Model Minority -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early farm agitations does not fit the "model minority" analysis.</li> <li>• Sikh/Punjabi events should be broken up.</li> <li>• The sample lesson needs to make a stronger connection to the misconceptions of the Model Minority Myth. Recommendation for educator to pull from Lesson 31.</li> </ul>		
<b>Sample Lesson 31: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the Model Minority Myth</b> <i>– comment made earlier in letter</i>		
<b>Sample Lesson 32: Cambodian Americans – Deportation Breaking Families Apart –</b> <i>Strong sample lesson</i>		
<b>Sample Lesson 33: South Asian Americans in the United States – no recommended edits.</b>		

<b>Sample Lesson 34: Building Empathy</b> - <i>rename sample lesson to “Oak Create case study: Building empathy”</i>
<b>Sample Lesson 35: Xenophobic Racism Against South Asians and Muslims</b> – <i>no recommended edits.</i>

Thank you to CDE (including the Ethnic Studies Curriculum writers, the ESMC committee, the Instructional Quality Commission, the State Board of Education, and everyone behind the scenes) for all of your work on this historical ESMC. We are excited to see the outcome of the final model curriculum.

We urge you to make the necessary edits to strengthen the Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies sample lessons. If you have any questions, please reach out to me directly at [ccapiaa@gmail.com](mailto:ccapiaa@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Nkauj Iab Yang  
Executive Director