

From: Andrew Stetkevich

Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 9:37 AM

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

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on proposed ethnic studies curriculum-input by educator

Dear Committee:

I reviewed the available Word documents that are online on the CDE website. I am providing my input as a recently retired K-12 public educator who worked for 37 years in California schools. My children also attend our local public schools. I also took an ethnic studies class at the University of California as an undergraduate student in 1979.

Excerpts from the ethnic studies proposed documents/drafts with my public comments:

1. critique empire-building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism[1] and other forms of power and oppression
2. challenge imperialist/colonial[2] beliefs and practices on multiple levels[3] [as1]

[1] As well as patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism

[2] and hegemonic

[3] Ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized

Public Comment: Notice this critique includes footnotes that imply that capitalism is a form of power and oppression since it is listed in the footnote for this language. My parents escaped an oppressive Marxist regime to come to America and participate in a capitalist society where they did not initially know the language. This section is biased by its multiple use of "isms" in the footnotes with the implication that they equate solely to oppression. My parents wished to live in a capitalist society even though they started with nothing. It was a marxist system that was oppressive to so many immigrants fleeing those forms of government.

People, including students, are not only members of racial and ethnic groups. They also belong to many other types of social groups. These groups may be based on such factors as sex, religion, class, ability/disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, and language use .

Public Comment: Where is the emphasis on diversity of thought? It appears that this curriculum guidance contradicts its intent, by treating members of racial, ethnic, gender, etc.. as monolithic. I am aware of and a member of a minority group that has very divergent ideas about these issues. Diversity of thought should be included. Just because I share the same race and ethnicity of a minority does not

mean that we all believe, think, or identify with our experiences in the same way. This is beyond social intersectionality.

The inequitable institutional treatment of certain racial and ethnic groups is sometimes referred to as systemic racism.

Public Comment: This statement should have a footnote with multiple, fact-based, and research reviewed citations since it is a major statement in this document. A governmental system is made of people who are elected by the people. Please cite all the official laws on the books that are racist for this section. Since you use the term "institutional", this must be based on current laws and regulations. I understand that past laws were discriminatory. This also should be taught in its historical perspective.

To some degree, each person's individuality and identity are the result of intersectionality. The lens of intersectionality helps both to explore the richness of human experience and to highlight the variations that exist within ethnic diversity. By highlighting intragroup variations, intersectionality can also help challenge group stereotyping and polarization.

Public Comment: Question? Does this imply that variations within a group or only due to intersectionality with another identified, social group? Could variation be due to critical thinking unrelated to identify as a member of a certain group? The above statement also need citations of research to support this contention since this is in a guidance document.

It can help students become more astute in critically analyzing documents, historical events, and multiple perspectives. It can help students learn to discuss difficult issues, particularly when race and ethnicity are important factors. It can help students learn to present their ideas in strong, compelling, jargon-free language. It can help students assess various strategies for bringing about change. It can provide students with opportunities to experiment with different change strategies, while evaluating the strengths and limitations of each approach. In short, through ethnic studies students can develop civic participation skills, a greater sense of self-empowerment, and a deeper commitment to life-long civic engagement .

Public Comment: This is great as long as the teacher or students don't "cancel" a person who does not hold the common, consensus views of the majority of students in the ethnic studies class. Unfortunately, you have embedded jargon-laden language in this document. This includes the following terms: community actualization, cultural perpetuity, ableism, intersectionality. They may not seem like jargon to the authors, but students would see this as jargon. You write that students should use jargon-free language. These meaning of these terms could be stated without jargon.

...approach to ethnic studies by also devoting special attention to ethnic groups that have been significantly present in their own communities .

Public Comment: This line makes sense. Attention to the local community is relevant for discussion and an ethnic studies course.

This includes the ability to meet, discuss, and analyze sometimes controversial topics and issues that garner multiple diverse points of view. In other words, students should learn to participate in difficult dialogues.

Public Comment: As you know, the teacher must have PD and great skill to be an unbiased facilitator of these discussions. Evidence and facts should always accompany classroom facilitated discussions to emphasize solid, argumentative discussions. Without profession development on being an unbiased facilitator, this course could devolve into an ideological point of view or prevailing doctrine-influenced course.

Miscellaneous Comments: You provide a rationale for using latin (x) (o), and other gender neutral terms. Will you be teaching your English Learning or bilingual students not to use the masculine and feminine forms of specific words that are found in some languages? This includes languages, such as Spanish, French, Portugese, Romanian, Arabic, and Hebrew. Should multilingual students stop writing in the standard form of their native lanuages or will they be made to feel they are being unjust by not writing in gender neutral terms?

I reviewed the ethnic studies bibliography. I did not notice any works by people who actually lived through the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s with a possible divergent point of view . Will students be exposed to the works of Dr. Shelby Steele and Robert L. Woodson, Sr. as civil rights leaders. Will they have an opportunity to to discuss the works of Dr. Thomas Sowell, economist and social theorist? I really did not notice any of the works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the bibliography or even Malcolm X.

I also realize that the above names are specific to race and civil-rights issues in relation to African-American individuals.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for public comment.

Sincerely,

Andrew