

From: Joanne Donsky

Sent: Saturday, August 8, 2020 4:06 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Still many concerns about ESMC--especially guiding values and principles need to be revised

To: Members of IQC

Cc: Assemblyman Mark Berman, Senator Jerry Hill

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) of the California Board of Education,

I have personally reviewed much of the second draft of the ESMC.

While I appreciate that important changes have been made to the first draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), I am still very concerned about major flaws that remain in the second draft.

My **key concern is that the guiding values and principles—the basis of the whole curriculum—need significant revision**. Unfortunately, the guiding principles support a narrow political philosophy that promotes a victim mentality and an “us vs them” agenda. This leads to a one-sided political indoctrination rather than education. It is so very important that these principles be changed to reflect California's shared values, as well as the values laid out in AB 2016. I have reviewed the model lesson plans for the whole curriculum. I find it disturbing and sad that **a vast majority of the lesson plans are based on looking at each ethnic group through the oppressor/victim lens**. It is true, and it should be taught, that so many ethnic groups have suffered in history. But this should not be the thrust of the whole curriculum. There needs to be much more about what each ethnic group can be proud of about their culture as well as positive role models and what their ethnic group has contributed to our country. Students should learn about the many ways their own ethnic group—and others—have shown resilience and ingenuity to utilize the opportunity that so many have come to the US to find. It would also promote understanding and connection between groups—rather than divisiveness—to point to the history of other ethnic groups—who suffered some of the same oppressions—and how they moved forward and found success in the US.

Another, related, key problem is that the new draft does nothing prevent future ethnic studies courses from teaching in a politically indoctrinating way, such as the anti-Israel elements of the widely criticized first draft of the ESMC. There are excellent examples of ways to prevent such teaching. **The Elements of Balanced Curriculum from the LA Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Curriculum should be added to Chapter 1 of the ESMC's to provide clear ground rules for course development and instruction.** Many parts of the second draft of the ESMC need to be revised to expose students to “multiple and often competing sources of information” and ensure that “diverse viewpoints are respected”. Our children need education, not indoctrination.

My son went to public schools in San Mateo County, and my grandchildren likely will too. Luckily my son was not required to take courses with such political indoctrination built into them. I hope my grandchildren are able to learn about other ethnic groups in a way that will

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promote understanding not divisiveness.

I urge you to make significant revisions of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Respectfully yours,
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