

Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition **Public Comments and Updates** **for the CA Instructional Quality Commission** **Meeting, January 16th, 2020**

Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition is the leading Ethnic Studies advocacy group in California, with over 100 intergenerational, racially and ethnically diverse, community-based organizations, institutions, and institutional units in support, representing collective memberships of over 500,000.

Esteemed Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) Members, we thank you for your work, and for your support throughout 2019 and moving forward. New IQC Members in 2020, welcome to a project which has been over five decades in the making, and which will be remembered for generations to come. Ethnic Studies communities must be considered as the primary constituency for this project, and we are here to help keep the curriculum critically grounded and to maintain its transformative potential for our students across California, while also being open to consensus building with all reasonable stakeholders in Governor Newsom's California for All. We have already begun this consensus building process and look forward to continuing with it, ideally in collaboration with the CDE, so that by the time you receive the next iteration of the curriculum in April, there will be greater consensus among all reasonable stakeholders, and Ethnic Studies communities will not be put in a position where we ourselves must protest the course that carries our name. We thank you for doing what is right with this project, after our advocacy of 50+ years for it; indeed, we are all honored to participate in this moment with you, for past, present, and future generations. Let 2020 be remembered as the year we all come together for this. *Sí Se Puede*. Save CA Ethnic Studies.

For more info, please contact: saveCAethnicstudies@gmail.com

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1. Three Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition Petition Asks of California Department of Education


Join us today in demanding that the CA Department of Education, Instructional Quality Commission, State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and Governor Gavin Newsom:

1. Keep the current model curriculum draft (with some revisions) focused on the histories and social justice struggles of communities of color in the U.S.
2. Maintain the Ethnic Studies curricular framework—with disciplinary knowledge, language, and pedagogy—by not diluting or converting it into a non-equivalent field (i.e., multicultural studies, diversity studies, or area studies).
3. Improve accountability, transparency, and consensus-building with the Ethnic Studies expert practitioners of communities of color and Native people—throughout the entire model curriculum process and up until its completion and ratification.

11,409 have signed. Let's get to 15,000!

 MARY KAY BENSON

 Mary Kay Benson signed this petition

 Christopher Seechoo signed this petition

Thanks to your support this petition has a chance at winning! We only need 3,591 more signatures to reach the next goal - can you help?

[Take the next step!](#)

- We are thankful that it seems consensus has been reached on the first ask of our petition, although there are certain specifics, that must still be resolved. Further, there *is* room for more inclusivity while still keeping the curriculum centered on communities of color; this is one of the key strengths of Ethnic Studies, and happens through the cultural and community responsiveness that benefits *all* students in the classroom. Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition, can help the CDE strengthen this element for the subsequent iteration of the model curriculum – many of our coalition's educators, already do this in the classrooms and districts we have been demonstrating the transformative potential of Ethnic Studies in for years.
- A core focus is currently based around the second and third asks of our petition, which we humbly ask you to urge the CDE to do better with moving forward, to better support the Instructional Quality Commission and State Board of Education when the next iteration of the draft gets to you. This is what is needed, and as the leading Ethnic Studies educators and practitioners in the field, it should not be necessary to *wait* to begin this level of collaboration and consensus building until the next iteration is released in April. That puts extra onus on you, without having a background in Ethnic Studies yourselves. We have the extra time to come to consensus in strengthening the curriculum, we should use it wisely, and collaboration with Ethnic Studies communities is a necessary part of this, which is why we urge you to ensure it happens *before* you receive the next iteration in April.

2. Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition Supporters - Partial List

In addition to 10,000+ individuals directly signed on in support of the Save California Ethnic Studies Coalition in the initial month for the September 20, 2019 Instructional Quality Commission meeting, listed below are a few of over 100 community-based organizations, institutions, bodies, and units, in support of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft (with some revisions) and an authentic Ethnic Studies moving forward. The organizations below have combined memberships of over 500,000, representing communities of color and our allies, for educational, racial, and social justice.

1. AB 2016 California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (Feb - April, 2019)
2. Abner Mikva Challenge Action Civics California
3. Afro-Latinx Connection
4. Alianza - Sacramento
5. Alliance of South Asians Taking Action
6. American Indian & Indigenous Faculty Staff Association of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
7. Anakbayan Santa Cruz
8. Anakbayan UCLA
9. Apex Express
10. API's for Ethnic Studies
11. Asian Americans Advancing Justice
12. Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA)
13. Asians4BlackLives - Bay Area
14. Association of Ethnic Studies
15. Association of Raza Educators - California
16. Black Lives Matter - California
17. Black Student Union 1968 Strikers, San Francisco State University
18. California Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus
19. California Democratic Party Arab American Caucus
20. California Democratic Party Chicano Latino Caucus
21. California Faculty Association
22. California Indian History Curriculum Coalition
23. California Latino School Boards Association
24. California Latino Legislative Caucus
25. California Legislative Black Caucus
26. California State University Council on Ethnic Studies - representing Ethnic Studies depts on 22 CSU's
27. California State University Northridge, American Indian Student Association
28. California Teachers Association
29. California Teachers Association/Stanford Instructional Leadership Corps' Ethnic Studies Team
30. Center for Political Education
31. Central American United Student Association, CSUN
32. Central American Isthmus Graduate Association (CAIGA), UCLA

33. Chabot College Ethnic Studies Department
34. Chicano Moratorium 50 Year Anniversary Commemoration Committee
35. Chicano Research Center - Stockton
36. Christine Sleeter, Ph.D., author of National Education Association research review on Ethnic Studies, the only publication specifically cited in the AB 2016 legislation
37. Cruz Reynoso Voter Engagement Coalition
38. Compton Unified School District Board members
39. Council on American-Islamic Relations, California
40. Dalit American Foundation
41. Dreams to Be Heard
42. Eagle Condor Liberation Front, UCLA
43. Eclipse Rising, Zainichi Korean Organization
44. Education for Liberation Network
45. Education for Social Justice Foundation
46. Equality Labs
47. Ethnic Studies Now Coalition - California
48. Filipino American Educators Association of California
49. HOBAK Hella Organized Bay Area Koreans
50. IfNotNow Progressive Jewish American Activist Group
51. Indian People Organizing for Change
52. Jean Quan, first female Mayor of Oakland (2011-2015), AAPA and TWLF co-founder
53. Jewish Voice for Peace-Bay Area
54. Jewish Voice for Peace-Los Angeles
55. Keith Brown, President, Oakland Education Association
56. Korea Policy Institute
57. Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) Sacramento AFL-CIO
58. LEGACY Youth Project
59. LCLAA Sacramento AFL-CIO
60. League of United Latin American Citizens - California
61. Little Manila Rising
62. MEChA de CSUN
63. MEChA de UCLA
64. Middle East Children's Alliance
65. Napa Valley Ethnic Studies Advocates
66. National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Norcal Foco
67. National Association of Multicultural Education
68. Nodutdol for Korean Community Development
69. Peoples Education Movement - Bay Area
70. Peoples Education Movement - Los Angeles
71. People Organizing to Demand Economic & Environmental Rights - PODER
72. Pin@y Educational Partnerships - San Francisco
73. Politics and Pedagogy Collective

74. Pukúu Cultural Community Services, Native American Non-Profit Organization
75. Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Shomeret Shalom Global Congregation
76. Rethinking Schools
77. San Diego Jewish Action
78. San Diego Unified School District Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee
79. San Diego Unified School District Superintendent and School Board members
80. San Francisco Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)
81. San Francisco Unified School District Board members
82. San Francisco Supervisors members
83. Senior Rabbi Dev Nolly of Kehilla Community Synagogue - Oakland
84. Somos Familia Valle - San Fernando Valley LGBTQ+ Community Organization
85. South Asian Histories for All
86. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
87. Step Up! Sacramento
88. Students, in numbers, at High School, Community College, and University Levels
89. Teachers 4 Social Justice
90. The Arab American Studies Association
91. Third World Liberation Front 1968 Veterans, San Francisco State University
92. Third World Liberation Front 1969 @50, UC Berkeley
93. University of California Davis, Asian American Studies Department
94. University of California Davis, Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies
95. University of California Los Angeles Ethnic Studies Student Committee
96. University of California Los Angeles Undergraduate Students Association Council
97. University of California Merced, Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Department
98. University of California Riverside, Ethnic Studies Department
99. University of California San Diego, Ethnic Studies Department
100. University of California Santa Cruz, Ethnic Studies Student Committee
101. University of California Santa Cruz, Center for Racial Justice
102. University of California Santa Cruz, Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Department
103. United Teachers Los Angeles
104. Union del Barrio - California
105. Vietnamese Student Union, UCLA
106. White People for Black Lives
107. Women of Color/Non-Binary People of Color Scholars Inclusion Project
108. Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing
109. XOCHITL - Xicanx Organizers Cultivating Humanity & Indigeneity for Teaching and Learning
110. Youth Together - Oakland

and many more organizations, institutions, bodies, and units, with combined memberships of over 500,000 in support. Please email SaveCAethnicstudies@gmail.com to add to our list, and/or to work further with us in this movement for one of the key educational justice causes of our time. [Save CA Ethnic Studies](#)

3. Updates at the CDE Level - from Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition Perspective

- a. Ethnic Studies Expert Panel - *In Strong Support of Draft, In Strong Support of Arab American Studies as a Part of Asian American Studies*
- b. West Ed Focus Groups - *Noted Advisory Committee Members Would Be Invited, Were Not*
- c. Potential Alternate Guiding Principles - *Could Dilute of Transformative Potential*

CDE Update 1: Ethnic Studies Expert Panel, occurred on October 15th, 2019

4 Key Findings:

- Expert panelists strongly support the defining and framing of Ethnic Studies as found in the current draft, and its centering around the four core racialized communities of color. Each panelist offered a wealth of knowledge from their own experiences with Ethnic Studies.
- Expert panelists strongly support the draft's Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview, including the guiding values, principles, and outcomes of Ethnic Studies section, the language of Ethnic Studies present in the draft, the pedagogy section, and the overall draft itself. This support from Ethnic Studies leaders and communities is significant. While additional signposting and scaffolding is possible, diluting the sections and language currently present would be compromising imperative CA State Board of Education Ethnic Studies Guidelines. Further, it would be disregarding the 20 educators of color, one white educator in solidarity, and Ethnic Studies experts who already came to consensus on what this needs to be for the model curriculum, and which were supported by the 6 additional expert panelists convened for this session on October 15th, 2019.
- Asian American Studies expert panelist explicitly insisted Arab American Studies remain under Asian American Studies and that it not be sacrificed. If the expertise of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies scholars are disregarded here, it must be considered an act of institutional racism, Islamophobia, and Ant-Arabism. The Ethnic Studies expert panel made clear, Arab American Studies has a legacy as being a part of Asian American Studies.
- Within the draft and Ethnic Studies, there is room for more inclusion, and for it to still be within the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft's current intersectional framework. This is already implied in the draft, and has been evidenced in Ethnic Studies classrooms, through cultural and community responsiveness and deep ancestral inquiry. Expert practitioners including the advisory committee members and panelists, can help the CDE integrate this increased level of student responsiveness into the next iteration, and consensus build with various stakeholders on it, before it goes back to the IQC, and subsequently for public comment. The possibility of developing this responsiveness and inclusivity further in the draft cannot be ignored, it would be a disservice to all students of California.

Notes:

- Final question which expert panelists had prepared for was cut from the session.
- Scheduled 2 hour panel ended 45 minutes early.
- Hosted at the California Department of Education, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. on October 15, 2019.

CDE Update 2: West Ed Focus Groups, with High School Teachers, including those with and without Ethnic Studies Experience

Nomination Form from West Ed, misleading former Advisory Committee members into believing they would be invited to be a part of the focus groups, to help finish the work they began in light of reasonable public comments, and with sufficient time. Please see nomination form below for yourself.



Smartsheet

Ethnic Studies Focus Group Participation Nomination

The Region 15 Comprehensive Center (serving CA, NV, AZ, and UT) housed at WestEd is facilitating focus groups on behalf of the State Board of Education and the California Department of Education regarding implementation of an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Our intention is to hold the focus groups during the school day, reimburse participants for ground travel, and to provide funding for classroom subs. We will invite people who volunteered to serve on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, and we would like to include other participants.

If you have recommendations for participants whom we should invite, please fill out this form for each nominee and submit it. We will contact the participants you list for inclusion in our focus groups.

Thank you!

- Reportback from participants from the first West Ed focus group, held in Sacramento on December 4th, 2019.
 - Though the current ESMC draft was not an explicit part of the focus groups, participants in every focus group breakout session emphasized the importance and solid foundation of the draft, including its introductory chapter, defining of Ethnic Studies, and guiding values, principles, and outcomes section.
 - Further, the following is from several participants in the initial West Ed Focus group, from four different school districts, who were not originally represented on the advisory committee, yet, who are strongly advocating for the draft and for the advisory committee to continue being a formal part of the process moving forward:

We are concerned about the current model curriculum draft being omitted from this discussion. We are sure many of the issues discussed here today were already considered, and we feel it would have been more useful to spend time reconvening the original committee to revise the work they began. While we appreciate an opportunity to share our own insights and expertise as Ethnic Studies practitioners, we see the current model curriculum draft as an important and powerful foundational tool that provides an open door for school districts to have access to work that is ALREADY being done across our state. There is no reason that the model curriculum cannot be expanded upon to create more units that serve as excellent models to build upon. We keep reinventing the wheel in this process and clearly that is a strategy that places obstacles in the way of Ethnic Studies. Don't ignore the work that has already been done, and don't DISRESPECT the educators who already did the HEART WORK!

Sincerely,

Dec. 4th, West Ed Focus Groups, Teacher and Administrator Participants

Marisa Villegas
Ethnic Studies Teacher
Oakland Unified School District
Ethnic Studies Teacher

Tracie Noriega
Director, K-12 Instruction
Tri-Chair, Equity Council
New Haven Unified School District

Dominique Williams
Ethnic Studies Teacher
Sacramento City Unified School District

Erica Viray-Santos
Ethnic Studies Teacher & Coordinator
San Leandro Unified School District

Conclusions:

a) Minimally, former Advisory Committee members should be a part of the process moving forward as was indicated would happen by the West Ed nomination form, as CTA, CFA, certain IQC commissioners, and all CA Legislative Caucuses of Color have requested.

b) Even at the West Ed focus group session, consensus among Ethnic Studies communities is loud and clear — the overall draft, and critical elements of it including the introductory chapter and defining of Ethnic Studies, the guiding values, principles, and outcomes, pedagogy, cannot be compromised and need to remain in the curriculum moving forward. Further signposting, scaffolding, and ideally additional wrap around formatting, is possible to increase readability and accessibility for the largest range of readers, while still remaining critically grounded in Ethnic Studies as our students deserve. At the conceptual and language level, we cannot dilute it.

Possible CDE Update 3: Alternate Guiding Values, Principles, and Outcomes

It has come to our attention that potential alternate guiding values have been outsourced by the CDE, to an expert consultant in diversity studies and multicultural studies, which as our petition explicitly states, are not equivalent fields to Ethnic Studies.

Please refer to update 1 in this section for more on why not compromising these is so important. The current draft's section for this, is classroom and district tested, already utilized in Ethnic Studies teacher professional development sessions throughout the state and country, and has helped produce the transformative results at helping to narrow and eradicate the achievement/opportunity gap (education debt), that we know Ethnic Studies is capable of for our students.

Further, we are thankful that after hearing a presentation about the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition movement, the scholar who these potential alternate guiding values and principles were outsourced to, *now also supports allowing the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee Members sufficient time to finish their work*, and encourages the CDE's close collaboration with the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition. This is greatly appreciated.

4. Not Sacrificing Arab American Studies - It is Under the Rubric of Asian American Studies. Per Leading Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies Scholars

- a. CDE Ethnic Studies Expert Panel, October 15, 2019 - please refer to pg. 7
- b. The Association of Asian American Studies
- c. Chairs of Asian American Studies Departments



AAAS Statement on the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

We write as researchers, teachers, and organizers in the field of Asian American studies to lend our unequivocal support to the inclusion of Arab American studies in the current draft of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). The current draft includes Arab American studies under the rubric of Asian American studies, one of the four recognized pillars of ethnic studies as a field formation. Arab American studies has been a part of the broader field of Asian American studies for nearly two decades and ethnic studies since its inception fifty years ago. We oppose current and future efforts that seek to undermine, dilute, or sideline critical dimensions of the ESMC draft outside the mandated revision process. It troubles us greatly that a handful of outlier organizations, without a broad base or representational authority, has attempted to exclude Arab American studies from the curriculum. We insist on the inclusion of Arab American studies in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Asian American studies as a field has historically included research and teaching on the U.S.-Philippine War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War; the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II; the seizure and militarization of Hawai'i as well as the militarization of Guam, Samoa, and other Pacific islands; and U.S. nuclear testing on the Marshall Islands. It is because of the centrality of U.S. war and militarism as well as anti-imperialism as central tenets of analysis in Asian American studies that Arab American studies, in the post-9/11 era, has emerged both within and in dialogue with Asian American studies. Topics such as Orientalism, 9/11, U.S. wars of intervention, Islamophobia, the "war on terror," and racial securitization oftentimes emerge as explicit intersections between Asian American and Arab American studies.

In addition, Arab American studies is institutionally linked with Asian American studies in critical ways. The first ever Arab American Cultural Center at the University of Illinois, Chicago, was founded by Nadine Naber, whose appointment resides in the Global Asian Studies Program. In 2006, the *Journal of Asian American Studies*, the flagship journal of the Association for Asian American Studies, published a special issue on Asian/Arab American studies. *Amerasia* journal, one of the founding journals in Asian American studies, also recently published an issue similarly focused on the intersections of Asian American and Arab American studies. Moreover, the West Asian Section of the Association for Asian American Studies regularly sponsors panels related to Arab American issues.

We urge the California Department of Education (CDE) to be clear-sighted and undeterred in the inclusion of Arab American studies in the current draft of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). Indispensable to fairness of process and soundness of outcome is the continued formal involvement of the ESMC's original writers and committee members. The CDE must be transparent and accountable to the communities of color who have long agitated for ethnic studies as a democratizing project.



AASA
Arab American Studies Association

September 19, 2019

Dear Members of the California Instructional Quality Commission:

We are writing on behalf of the Arab American Studies Association. The Arab American Studies Association is a private, non-profit, nonpolitical organization of scholars and other people interested in the study of Arab American history, ethnicity, culture, literature, art and music, politics, religion, sociology and other aspects of Arab American experience. The objectives of the Association are to advance the study of Arabs in diaspora, including in North America.

We write to applaud the California Department of Education's recognition of Arab American Studies as a crucial dimension of an Ethnic Studies curriculum. We find the Arab American Studies Course Outline to be thorough, enriching, and complex. In drafting the Arab American Studies Course Outline, the CDE has aligned itself with decades of scholarly and pedagogical literature in the field of Ethnic Studies, literature that at once illuminates the heterogeneous histories, fractures, and patterns of Arab American life; and understands Arab American lives to be lived in complex relation to racism, Orientalism, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiment. The Course Outline challenges the prevailing conflation of Arabs with Muslims, Persians, and Sikhs; offers nuanced exposure to the histories of Arab immigration and labor; and recognizes how processes of racialization are linked to law, policy, and culture.

Furthermore, we echo and support the three demands made by the Save California Ethnic Studies coalition: namely that the defining focus of the Model Curriculum draft remain on the histories and social justice struggles of communities of color; that the Ethnic Studies disciplinary pedagogy and expertise remain at the core of the project; and that the community of Ethnic Studies practitioners who created and vetted this curriculum remain at the table as it is revised and implemented.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Howell

President, Arab American Studies Association

Amira Jarmakani

President-Elect, Arab American Studies Association

Keith P. Feldman

Secretary, Arab American Studies Association

October 14, 2019

Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Re: APIs for Ethnic Studies' Statement on the Disciplinary Boundaries of Ethnic Studies

Dear Committee Members:

We, as directors and chairs of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies programs in Northern California, wish to provide input as you consider California's Model Ethnic Curriculum. Specifically, we express our support for the inclusion of Arab American and Pacific Islander Studies as an extension of Asian American Studies.

Asian American Studies (AAS) has been an academic discipline for the past fifty years, addressing the unique voices, histories, humanities, and issues of this broad, racialized group. Emerging from the Black Student Union/Third World Liberation Front strike at SF State University, the founders of Asian American Studies challenged the twin evils of racism at home and militarism abroad. As this discipline has grown, it has come to encompass more groups and topics, and to develop its own theories and methodologies.

AAS is partnering with Pacific Islander and Arab American communities in its scholarship because of our shared regional and social experiences including 1) Orientalization (as coined by Arab American intellectual, Edward Said); 2) discrimination and stereotyping as nonwhites, and 3) colonization of our lands, cultures, and peoples. As a politicized grouping—as seen in the federal designation of Asian American Native American Pacific Islander serving institutions (AANAPISI)—we work in education to empower our respective communities, fight for social justice, and effect societal change. Thus, our courses learning outcomes reflect this mission across campuses.

Another example of the expansion of Asian American Studies is the faculty position for both Asian American Studies and Critical Pacific Islands and Oceania Studies at SF State University. Prof. Ponipate Rokoluketu teaches in both programs, and our courses will be linked.

Since its founding, AAS has aligned itself with its fellow disciplines in Ethnic Studies: American Indian Studies, Africana/Black Studies, and Chicano/ Latinx,¹ groups that have been racialized as nonwhites and part of the common struggle for racial justice and equity. In 1972, AAS scholars played a significant role in the establishment of National Association of Interdisciplinary Studies for Native American, Black,

¹ The CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies defines the field as "the study of race and ethnicity anchored in the histories and philosophies, from the perspective of and in the service of the community-based needs, of people of color... It will address the intersectionality of race and ethnicity with gender, sexuality, disability, and other areas from the perspective of ethnic studies; however, will not speak about or for allied disciplines." *Report of the CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies*, 2016.

Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Asian Americans (renamed the Association of Ethnic Studies in 2017). In California, AAS has also been constituent program in the broader field of Ethnic Studies.

For instance, in 1992 the CSU Council of Ethnic Studies first convened with an AAS representative as a constituent member to respond to the Los Angeles riots and to improve race relations. At that meeting, this council reaffirmed that Ethnic Studies should focus on the experiences of people of color through the four original racialized groups. At the campus level, in 2002 the Master's program of Asian American Studies at CSU Long Beach was threatened to be cut. This program worked in solidarity with other programs; it fought to keep the Department of Africana Studies from being downgraded to only a program, and to keep Native American Studies from being folded into the Department of History.

Similarly, by extending AAS to the experiences of our Pacific Islander and Arab American counterparts, we are enriching our discipline while demonstrating much-needed solidarity with communities from our region that are inadequately represented in courses across California.

Thank you again for your hard work, and we would appreciate forwarding our suggestions to the Department of Education and the state legislature.

Prof. Russell Jeung
Chair, San Francisco State University AAS

Prof. Robyn Rodriguez
Chair, UC Davis AAS

Prof. Genevieve Leung
Chair, on behalf of the University of San Francisco Asian Pacific American Studies

Prof. Angie Fa
Chair, City College of San Francisco AAS
Titles and Institutions for Identification Purposes

Cc: Assemblymember Shirley Weber; Dr. Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales



August 23, 2019

From the sole author whose work is specifically cited in AB 2016 legislation, which brought about this Ethnic Studies model curriculum project.

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
1430 N Street, Suite 5602
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

I am writing in strong support of the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum draft. I have carefully reviewed the draft that was crafted over the spring and approved for public comment in May by the Instructional Quality Commission. As some background, I have been actively involved in multicultural education at a national level since the 1980s (I am a past president of the National Association for Multicultural Education), and in ethnic studies for almost as long. In addition, I have reviewed the research on the impact of ethnic studies on students for the National Education Association (NEA) in 2011. My NEA research review is the only publication specifically noted in the AB 2016 ethnic studies legislation, and I have written an update of that review for a book about K-12 Ethnic Studies that is currently in press with Teachers College Press.

I am concerned that responses to the curriculum, particularly by white people, will lead to a dilution of the curriculum in a way that moves it away from the powerful and positive impact it can have on students. Research on the impact of ethnic studies is quite clear: of the studies assessing its academic impact, the great majority find a positive impact on the achievement of students of color. In addition, the great majority find a positive impact on the racial attitudes of diverse student groups that include white students.

Having spent decades as a national leader in multicultural education, I can see why this is the case. Although textbooks and other curricula now include contributions of and references to people of color more now than they used to, the overall way of looking at the world is still generally through a white point of view. This is particularly the case when taught by white teachers, or by teachers who have not grappled with the impact of a white-centered education on their own worldview. As students go through the K-12 system, research on students' perspectives finds students of color increasingly distrusting or simply not relating to what they are being taught in school. Unfortunately, this whitening of perspectives has shaped a lot of what multicultural education has become in K-12 schools. National leaders in

multicultural education such as James Banks and Geneva Gay do not water down its meaning or implications, but how their work is taken up in classrooms routinely does so; we cannot afford for that to happen with ethnic studies.

The ethnic studies model curriculum as written centers the perspectives and experiences of communities marginalized on the basis of race, and the ancestral knowledge of peoples who are not of European descent. To achieve the positive impact on students that research finds ethnic studies capable of effecting, that centering must remain. It is of value for white students to engage in such a curriculum, but white perspectives cannot dilute its focus on peoples of color. Being white myself, this is something I have spent my professional life grappling with. I stand ready to help Californians figure out how to help white people navigate ethnic studies, but not if the curriculum itself moves away from centering Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, and Arab American experiences and perspectives.

I firmly hope that you will support the work of the ethnic studies curriculum writers and advisory committee. They have done an outstanding job of showing us what a model ethnic studies curriculum looks like. Units can certainly be added to it, but not in a way that undermines it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Sleeter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Christine Sleeter
Professor Emerita

From the founders of Ethnic Studies in California,
50 years ago.



September 20th, 2019

Dear California Instructional Quality Commission,

We are representing the original members of the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), who in 1969, went on a university student strike to demand a Third World College, the right to see ourselves reflected in our curriculum. Together with the San Francisco State University TWLF, ours remain the two longest student strikes in United States history. At UC Berkeley, our department of Ethnic Studies was founded in 1969 because of our effort for educational and racial justice for students of color. Today, our legacy continues, and TWLF members from throughout five decades of struggle are joining us for this cause. We stand in support of the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) draft, the State Board of Education appointed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (ES-MCAC), and the three demands of the Save California Ethnic Studies coalition.

Although Ethnic Studies courses, programs, and departments continue to exist in many institutions of higher learning, few have been recognized and institutionalized with the level of academic credibility, acceptance, and support that they deserve. Today, the California Department of Education has the opportunity, and the responsibility to our state's high school students, to institutionalize authentic Ethnic Studies within its public school curricula and course offerings. Our state's core curriculum has been derelict for the past 50 years in providing more inclusivity and a diversity of viewpoints within its courses, classrooms, and textbooks sparingly adding historical or cultural references limited to a handful of exceptional figures like César Chávez and Maya Angelou. The participation and contributions of Native American, Chicanx/Latinx, African American, and Asian American communities run so deep in the development and shaping of our country, and yet the curriculum still does not reflect these stories. These communities have shaped the history, culture, social and labor movements, fine arts, literature, sciences and mathematics, sports, and all other realms of our country's development.

Ethnic Studies courses, with a commitment to holding up these historically silenced voices, must be integral to our schools' curricula as they will broaden our students' critical thinking, learning, and personal achievement. Creating more understanding and connection for our youth is, indeed, liberating and necessary for ALL of our students.

We appeal to each and every one of you, individually and collectively, to honor the legacy of Ethnic Studies, that we personally set in motion 50 years ago, and which has continued until today-- through rallies, sit-ins, strikes, and hunger strikes when necessary. For a Model Curriculum that carries the name Ethnic Studies, expert ES educators (including the ES-MCAC), current students, and communities of color should not have to still go through the same painful and severe measures today. Instead, the discipline and the work of its strikers, community advocates, scholars, and educators, need to be honored, and the draft maintained as the core moving forward. It will have the best results at achieving the transformative potential Ethnic Studies courses have proven capable of. We urge you to prioritize this. It is necessary to bridge the growing divide and counter the racial and ethnic fear and hatred being sowed by the forces of ignorance and inequality. Take your place in history to do the right thing for students of past, present, and future generations.

Sincerely,

University of California, Berkeley
Third World Liberation Front, TWLF@50 Years

Floyd Huen, Class of 1969
Ysidro Macias, Class of 1969 & 1971
Betty Kano, Class of 1969 & 1978
Gregory Yee Mark, Class of 1969
Clementina Durón, Class of 1970
Nina Genera, Classes of 1970 & 1973
Alvin Ja, Class of 1971
Jean Quan, Class of 1971
Victoria Wong, Class of 1971
Jose Joel Garcia, Class of 1973
Marcelo Felipe Garzo Montalvo Classes of 2009, 2012, & Ph.D. Candidate
Marisol Silva, Class of 2009, & Ph.D. Candidate
Alex Mabanta, Class of 2016, & Ph.D. Candidate

with:

Alberto Bernal, Amy Y. Lin, Pablo Gonzalez, Astrid Gonzales, Beatriz M. Pesquera,
Bea Dong, Belvin Louie, Betty Kano, Blanca Quintanilla, Bob Wing,
Barrie Quan, Brian Tom, Xamuel Bañales, Maria Ramirez, Carlos Muñoz Jr.,
Cynthia Ledesma, Melody Chao, LaNada War Jack, Harvey C. Dong,
Roberto D. Hernández, Daisy Fang, Donna Soliz, Edel Romy, Francisco Hernandez,
Lupe Gallegos-Diaz, Rafael Yamir Gomez-Carrasco, Steven Wong, Jennie Luna,
Johnny Nguyen, Jesus Maldonado, Joanne Yi, Lotus Fong, Jeff Leong, Tomas Almaguer,
Ling-chi Wang, Manuel R. Delgado, Salomon Quintero, Richard Lim.



Representing Ethnic Studies departments across 22 campuses of the Cal State University system.

c/o Office of the College of Ethnic Studies
César E. Chávez Institute
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue EP103
San Francisco, CA 94132

August 14, 2019

Dear Assemblymembers Medina and Weber and other interested parties:
Subject: What is and is NOT Ethnic Studies

First, let me convey my appreciation to both of you and the continued support of the California State University (CSU) Council on Ethnic Studies for both AB331 and AB1460. We have been made aware of discussions that seem to be confusing and conflating the discussion of Ethnic Studies, the disciplinary area, and the study of ethnicity, race or other demographics by other disciplinary areas. I am attaching the original letter from our council in support of AB1460 and am expanding here on what it means to be Ethnic Studies and, probably more importantly what it means to NOT be Ethnic Studies. I will explain in reverse order.

Ethnic Studies is NOT any disciplinary study of ethnicity or race. As my colleague Professor Craig Stone from CSU Long Beach put it during deliberations for the CSU Chancellor's Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies, (paraphrasing) if that were the case, modern Ethnic Studies would not have been created. Before 1968, many humanities, social science and science disciplines studied ethnicity and race, but they just did so poorly and in a manner dangerous to people of color, the various peoples who were considered non-White and were historically oppressed for being non-White in America, African, Asian, Latino and Native Americans.

Ethnic Studies is the discipline that grew out of the, yes admittedly political, and academic context to decenter White Studies, White Supremacy and the privileged White narrative of the American experience. Ethnic Studies re-centered the studies of people of color, African/Black American, Asian American, Latino/Raza and Native/Indigenous Americans to insure that the study of ethnicity and race in relationship to these peoples were done centered from the perspective, questions, needs and aspirations of the peoples being studied, in intentional counter narrative to that which centered the study of people of color from the perspectives, needs, questions, and aspirations of White Supremacy or Whiteness as some inherent norm for humanity. Ethnic Studies is, therefore, an explicit counternarrative to decolonize the academic narratives, which would speak or act on people of color without our permission and without our self-determined interest at the center of the studies. There are many other disciplines and studies with long histories studying ethnicity or race as central or secondary to their studies, but not with this disciplinary center. Thus, there are some studies that center or at least address the *topics of* race or ethnicity, but they do not center the experiences, intellectual traditions, and liberation struggles of people of color in America, where "people of color" is an idiomatic phrase referring to the peoples historically and continuously excluded from and oppressed by the project of Whiteness. We appreciate those other studies, but distinguish ourselves from them.

California State University (CSU) Campuses

Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach
Los Angeles • Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego
San Francisco • San José • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

For example, any studies of European ethnic groups or groups assimilated into or overlapping with Whiteness are typically not within the scope of Ethnic Studies, except when centered in the experiences of people of color who are doing critical or comparative studies examining those experiences in the Ethnic Studies context. Therefore, the study of Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, or Polish ethnicities would fit within traditional White or Euro-centered curricula, not modern Ethnic Studies.

Specifically, we have been told that some legislators are arguing that Jewish Studies is in Ethnic Studies. Jewish Studies has over a century of tradition in the American Academy as either religious or cultural/multicultural studies, but it has no academic tradition inside of Ethnic Studies at any point in the 50-year history of the field. This does not diminish the importance of Jewish Studies; to the contrary, it simply respects its academic tradition. Jewish Studies for the most part was a project to understand the assimilation of American Jews into American Whiteness. The portion that was not assimilationist into Whiteness still did not focus on Jews of color, African/Black Jews, Asian Jews, etc., and definitely did not re-center Jewish Studies as a people of color, decolonial project. As a practical datum point, when the CSU Task Force on Advancing Ethnic Studies and polled the 23 Campuses for a listing of Ethnic Studies departments, units, or programs, not a single campus registered Jewish Studies among their Ethnic Studies offerings.

As an educator and scholar who allies strongly and regularly with Jewish Studies, has collaborated with a K-12 Holocaust studies program, chaired the committee that hired the first endowed chair in Jewish Studies, and was lead administrative support for San Francisco State's nationally heralded report on President's Task Force on Inter-group Relations: Initial Focus on the Effect of Middle East Issues on Campus Life (a collaborative work that included scholars and community members from the Arab, Jewish, and Muslim communities among others). I strongly support those who wish to advance Jewish Studies, but not by compromising the academic integrity of either Ethnic Studies or Jewish Studies. This argument is broader than Jewish Studies, but we are receiving specific questions about Jewish Studies and therefore wanted to address this directly. Jewish Studies and other studies not rooted in Ethnic Studies as defined above may be supported in their own and appropriate legislation, policy and practice. They can call on us as allies to assist them, as we call on them to support us now, but we must all resist having our academic integrity compromised by political expediencies, for the sake of all legitimate academic studies.

AB331, AB1460 and the Ethnic Studies Curriculum are all on the right track, staying focused on their core, Ethnic Studies. Other studies should be handled within their correct and well documented traditions. I strongly encourage you and your colleagues to remain focused on this great work as a model for how solid academic thinking and excellent legislation go hand in hand.

Sincerely,

Professor Kenneth P. Monteiro, (for identification purposes only)

Former Dean, College of Ethnic Studies

Acting Director, César E. Chávez Institute

Coordinator, CSU Council on Ethnic Studies

Member, CSU Chancellor's Task Force on Advancing Ethnic Studies



Board of Supervisors

City and County of San Francisco

MATT HANEY
DISTRICT 6

September 5, 2019

California Department of Education
1430 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Honorable California State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Board of Education President, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond:

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment regarding your recent decision to end the current effort to revise the existing draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC).

As the former President of the San Francisco Board of Education I have led initiatives to better support students of color who have often felt marginalized, especially when critical decisions about their education are being made. After talking with students and their families they've expressed deep concerns to me about feeling unrepresented in the classroom curriculum. Their stories are missing in textbooks where the rich culture and history of their community is blatantly ignored. It is incredibly vital that we support the ESMC so that all children understand that everyone's history is equally important.

The committee members, co-chairs and writers of the ESMC stand by their drafted document, but also understand that a principal value of this work is to incorporate feedback, be inclusive of discussion and viewpoints, and address things from a perspective of inclusivity. The narrative that the ESMC is anti-Semitic and/or an erasure of the Jewish experience in the United States is misguided and wrong. I ask that you reconsider your opposition to the established process and allow for revisions that align with the purpose of AB 2016 and respect the tremendous effort put into the 550+ page draft document by the 18 members of the committee, the co-chairs, three writers and support staff from the California Department of Education (CDE).

As we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the field of Ethnic Studies, we emphasize that Ethnic Studies centers the experiences and viewpoints of people of color within, as well as beyond, the United States. San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is committed to honoring this long-standing mission. While Ethnic Studies acknowledges that Jewish, Armenian, Irish, Italian, and other European ethnic groups have undergone oppression and marginalization at various points in their history in the United States, it is critical that we examine how the role and function of "whiteness" has played in their assimilation into American society, while simultaneously excluding ethnic groups of color.



Board of Supervisors

City and County of San Francisco

Ethnic Studies was created to address the long-standing omissions and misrepresentations of the narratives of Native Americans, African Americans, Latinx and Asian Americans in the United States. Given the histories of these communities, it is imperative that these perspectives remain the central focus of the field.

While there are tremendous challenges to the creation of a single resource that speaks to all communities of color in California, we urge you to protect the process and to allow for the draft to be completed. White supremacy has historically and continues to be prevalent in the United States, and throughout the world. Our children and youth must be equipped with the knowledge, skills and sensibilities to identify systems of oppression and then powerfully respond with solidarity in defense of democracy and humanity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Haney", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Haney
Supervisor, District 6
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

BLACK LIVES MATTER

August 15, 2019

California Instructional Quality Commission
and State Board of Education

Re: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum – Support

On behalf of the Black Lives Matter Global Network's California Chapters, we write to express our support for the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum as submitted and to oppose proposed modifications that would expand the definition of Ethnic Studies beyond its scope, whereby eroding its intent. As you know, Black Studies is, perhaps, the most enduring victory of the Black Power era. As a current iteration of the Black freedom movement, Black Lives Matter understands the deep importance of Ethnic Studies and its four sub-disciplines: African-American/Africana/Black Studies, Asian/Asian-American Studies (including API Studies), Chicana/Latina Studies, and Indigenous/Native American Studies, especially in an era of soaring hate crimes, White-supremacist rhetoric, racist policy-making, and White-supremacist violence against racialized "others," especially Black and Latinx communities.

A Stanford University study demonstrates that in school districts where quality Ethnic Studies curricula are implemented, students experienced a rise in grade-point-average of up to an entire point. A California State University, Los Angeles study affirms that students who enroll in at least one Ethnic Studies course perform better overall, even in seemingly unrelated courses like math and science. Moreover, scholars like Gloria Ladson-Billings assert that Ethnic Studies curricula enable students to develop greater cultural-competency and are much better equipped to engage diverse communities.

The passage of AB 2016 indicates that the California Legislature sees Ethnic Studies as a worthwhile investment for the students of the state. As such, the integrity of Ethnic Studies must be protected. The Model Curriculum, as submitted, protects the integrity of Ethnic Studies and engages the field in a manner that fosters a greater understanding and embrace of groups that have been historically oppressed by race in the Americas. The proposed curriculum further engages the intersectionality of each group, without collapsing race-based oppression and resistance with other axes, like culture and religion. While the expansion of the definition of Ethnic Studies might appear to advance "tolerance," it does so at the expense of deepening our commitment to the communities that have been most marginalized by race. Ethnic Studies is not the same as "multicultural studies," "diversity studies," or even "American Studies." The thrust of Ethnic Studies focuses on the particular (and intersectional) experiences of the four historically oppressed racialized groups. We offer our strong support of the current model curriculum and encourage the Commission to accept the definition as presented by virtually every scholar in the field.

Thank you for your consideration.

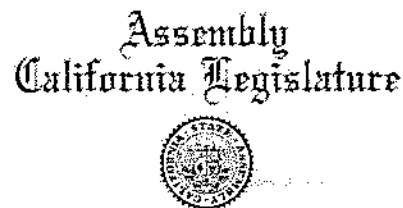
Sincerely,

Melina Abdullah, Ph.D.
for the Black Lives Matter Global Network, California Chapters

CHAIR:
ASSEMBLYMEMBER DAVID CHIU

VICE CHAIR:
ASSEMBLYMEMBER AL MURATSUCHI
SENATOR RICHARD PAN

PARLIAMENTARIAN:
ASSEMBLYMEMBER ASH KALRA



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ASSEMBLYMEMBER TODD GLORIA
ASSEMBLYMEMBER EVAN LOW
ASSEMBLYMEMBER ADRIN NAZARIAN
ASSEMBLYMEMBER PHILIP Y. TING

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

October 24, 2019

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Superintendent Thurmond:

On behalf of the California Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus, we write in support of the initial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) draft. We appreciate the efforts and expertise of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee and the opportunity provided by the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) and your office to continue stakeholder engagement for future revisions to make the curriculum even stronger.

Ethnic studies is imperative to student learning and growth. The API Legislative Caucus has advocated for and championed legislation to mandate this course in our schools in direct response to the needs we have heard from our communities.

This curriculum is a vital framework for California public schools across the state, and we must work to ensure the model curriculum is inclusive and free from bias. Stakeholders from the API community have shared their concerns about the draft and have submitted their comments. One major concern is that some API communities are missing from the curriculum such as Korean, Lao and South Asian. In the Pacific Islander curriculum, there are consistency issues such as the use of "Guamanian" and "Chamorro" as interchangeable. We encourage the IQC to examine these comments seriously to ensure that the diversity of our API communities are represented and that the information is accurate.

Additionally, the API Legislative Caucus shares the Jewish community's concerns with the current draft of the ESMC as it pertains to the omission of anti-Semitism. In our current climate, we must provide our students with accurate information and avoid a curriculum that will marginalize or promote discrimination.

We understand that, as Superintendent, you are holding a statewide series of listening and feedback sessions with stakeholders including teachers, school districts and other experts to ensure that this model curriculum reflects our diversity. We encourage the Instructional Quality Commission and your office to consider the comments referenced in this letter as the next version of the ESMC is developed. Additionally, as the initial architects of the ESMC, we hope that members of the ESMC Advisory Committee are also consulted throughout the revision process.

Please count on us as a partner to disseminate information to our API communities on future stakeholder engagement opportunities. Thank you for your commitment to providing all of California's students with a comprehensive curriculum that allows students to think critically and learn about our state's diversity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Chiu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Chiu" clearly distinguishable.

DAVID CHIU
Assemblymember, 17th A.D.
Chair, Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus



November 25, 2019

Honorable Tony Thurmond
Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
1430 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Superintendent Thurmond:

On behalf of the California Latino Legislative Caucus (Latino Caucus), we write in strong support of keeping the draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) process moving forward. We offer our sincere praise to all the educators, officials and residents that have dedicated their time and energy to the development of the ESMC.

For many Californians, the establishment of a model curriculum in ethnic studies has been a mission for decades. The Latino Caucus has long supported this mission and has prioritized the adoption of legislation requiring the teaching of ethnic studies in our schools. At its core, ethnic studies is the untold stories of four main communities of color- African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian-Americans. We understand, and research has supported, the importance of teaching students the untold stories of discrimination and racism faced by these communities. Ethnic studies is a multidisciplinary study centered on anti-racism. Furthermore, research shows that ethnic studies courses give students a pathway to break the cycle of poverty, violence and incarceration that many communities of color face.

The adoption of a comprehensive curriculum that accurately reflects the vast diversity and historical significance of ethnic cultures in our society is long overdue. Now more than ever, California's students, who are growing up in a majority-minority state, deserve the opportunity to learn the true history of their ancestors, including sobering topics of racial bias, legal inequities and societal marginalization. The exposure to an ethnic studies curriculum benefits all students (in and out of the classroom) by broadening their knowledge of history and raising cultural awareness. Moreover, ethnic studies has a positive impact on academic engagement, better test scores, and improved graduation rates.

CHAIRWOMAN
Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez

VICE CHAIRWOMAN
Senator María Elena Durazo

SENATORS
Bob Archuleta, Anna Caballero, Lena A. Gonzalez, Rep. Hueso, Melissa Hurtado, Susan Robio

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS
Cecilia Aguilar-Gerry, Joaquin Arambula, Ian Calderon, Wendy Carrillo, Sabrina Cervantes, Susan Tafamantes Eggman, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Todd Gloria, Monique Lamon, Jose Medina, Sharon Quick Silva, James C. Rios, Speaker Anthony Rendon, Elise Gomez Reyes, Luz M. Rivas, Robert Rivas, Freddie Rodriguez, Blanca E. Rubio, Rudy Salas, Miguel Santiago

1020 N Street, Suite 511 • Sacramento, CA 95814 • Phone (916) 651-1535



Printed on Recycled Paper

Ethnic studies goes deeper than multiculturalism and the stakes are too high for our students to discard the work of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee and the Instructional Quality Commission. It is for the aforementioned reasons that we write in strong support of keeping the process of the ESMC moving forward. We are grateful that you are overseeing the process that will lead to the timely adoption of an historic ethnic studies model curriculum. We hope the ensuing review period will only serve to strengthen the draft curriculum by bolstering its historical integrity and not substantially delaying its finalization.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. Our caucus stands ready to assist you in this important endeavor in any way you deem necessary. Should you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to call us at (916) 651-1535.

Sincerely,



LORENA GONZALEZ
Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus
Assemblywoman, 80th District



MARIA ELENA DURAZO
Vice Chair, CA Latino Legislative Caucus
Senator, 24th District

cc:

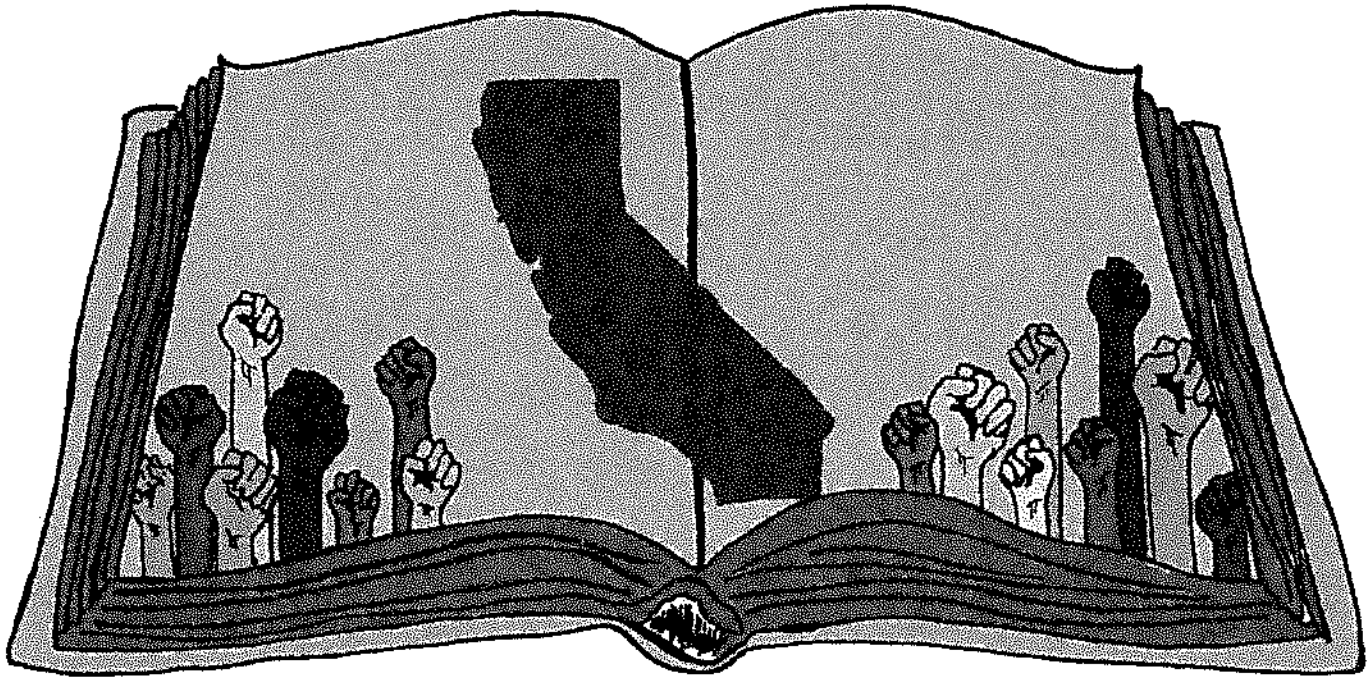
Members, California Latino Legislative Caucus



Ethnic Studies Curriculum Should be Required in all California High Schools

By a 10th grade Ethnic Studies high school student.

BY ANJUNA MASCARENHAS-SWAN

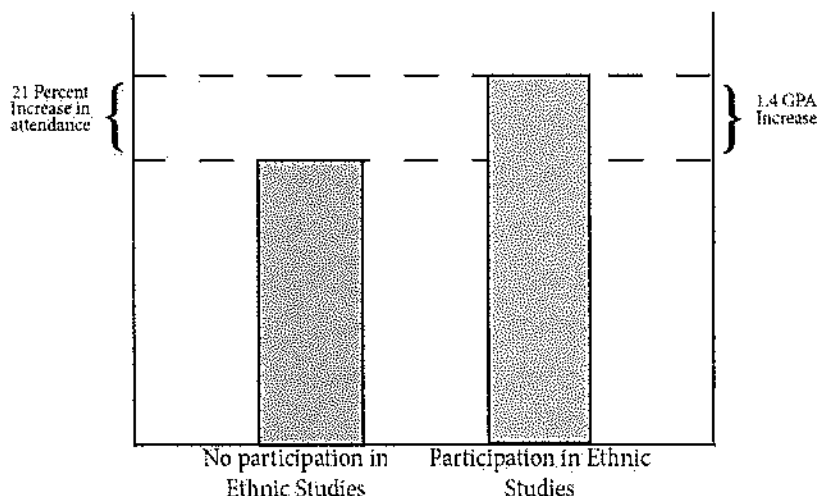


If you go to Berkeley High School (BHS), you've likely experienced the loaded question "So what do you think of Ethnic Studies?" at some point in your high school career. As the Ethnic Studies movement grows in popularity, the debate has become a statewide discussion. After a long fought battle, California recently mandated Ethnic Studies curriculum in public schools, although there have been delays in the implementation due to struggles over curriculum content. Luckily, here at BHS, the curriculum has already been adopted for students in their freshman year. The positive effects on students enrolled in this course prove ethnic studies should be taught for at least one semester at all high schools in California. For the class to be effective, the curriculum should be regulated in order to ensure that the class remains a safe space for all students. This will help promote open, critical thinking, and encourage a better-educated future generation.

Critics have accused drafts of the curriculum of promoting a left wing political agenda and containing bias against Israel and Jews. They object to the proposed syllabus promoting social

justice organizing and examining the privilege that each student holds. After this backlash, the curriculum developers went back to the drawing board to create an educational program that balances the core values central to Ethnic Studies as well as pleases the political bodies fundamental to ensuring that the course can exist in classes statewide. Three members of the California Board of Education released a press statement, saying that “A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state, and align with Governor Newsom’s vision of a California for all.” Prioritizing these three goals for the curriculum will address the critique of intrinsic bias.

However, Ethnic Studies in and of itself will always seem to align with leftist politics and ideals, and claiming that the class is biased because of that fact is simply hypocritical. Most current history curriculum serves to propagate the acceptance of colonialism, westernization and, all classically conservative ideals, but because they continue with the dominant narrative, the biases woven into



these version of history are all too often simply accepted and internalized. Ethnic Studies serves as a counter narrative to these ideals that we accept as essential to functioning society simply because we are not given another side of the story. The most fundamental part of a fully functioning and effective education is to grant students the tools to question their surroundings. Ethnic Studies as a class helps students apply a critical lens to the media and histories they consume or on a day to day basis. This often means criticizing in turn, many ideals or realities which are taken for granted, such as capitalism, colonialism, extreme poverty, or even country borders. Refraining from revering or upholding these topics in the curriculum, or even from teaching a narrative which supports such ideals does not mean that the class in and of itself is a biased one.




Additionally, there is some concern that such a class will create a toxic environment for non POC students or foster a space that only welcomes certain political ideals and isolates others. In reality, Ethnic Studies does not condone values that mirror or perpetuate hate speech, or that dehumanize or demonize groups of people for their identity. However, by creating a space where open dialogue is encouraged and students are taught how to engage in respectful and thoughtful debate through relationship based learning, the class can actually help to bridge political and moral differences and cultivate an environment of learning and

understanding that many other courses simply can't offer. Furthermore, this same rhetoric can assist in ensuring that no student feels targeted because of their race, while still pushing them to examine their privilege or oppression in their daily lives. In fact, Ethnic Studies can often make students who might typically struggle in school feel more comfortable in their environment. A Stanford study of high school students in ethnic studies found significant improvements in student performance. The research paper, authored by Thomas Dee and Emily Penner, expressed that "Overall, [their] findings indicate that a culturally relevant curriculum implemented in a strongly supportive context can be highly effective at improving outcomes among a diverse group of academically at-risk students."

The Ethnic Studies experience at BHS however, is bound to be a different one than anywhere else in California, simply because of the unique political and economic situation that exists in Berkeley. How is it possible to regulate such a class where the outcome and overall messages that are formulated in that environment are so often very dependent on the teacher or students in that class? The answer may be simpler than we think. By instituting strict curriculum and creating a controlled hiring process for all teachers wishing to teach the class, a certain degree of control can be exercised over the direction that the class takes, which is more than most students would say about standard history classes.

Ethnic Studies creates a space for students to learn about ideas that are not taught in the everyday textbook. It teaches them how to question and critique standards everyone else might consider normal, and to stand up and speak out when they see something that's wrong.

These values taught in Ethnic Studies can be kept with students for the rest of their life, throughout any career, and their formal education. Here at BHS, we can already see how the class has furthered a culture of activism and political awareness simply from the implementation during students freshman year. Imagine what a year of the class could do at a school where the political climate is even less suited for such a subject. By ensuring that students have access to this knowledge and skills now, we create a more aware, prepared future for generations to come, which is not something to take lightly in this era.

 ANJUNA MASCARENHAS-SWAN  September 2019  Published in Opinion

What do you think?

Ethnic studies is about interrupting racism in America... The real question is, can California come together to demonstrate to the entire world that a diverse community can unite to make this possible? Well, now is that time.

The following are a few select CA State Board of Education (SBE) Ethnic Studies Guidelines that the current draft is already on an excellent trajectory with, and which the ESMC-MCAC and Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition, in consensus building with diverse stakeholders, can help further strengthen and scaffold. Diluting the curriculum, would be doing a disservice to these SBE guidelines, and most importantly, would be doing a grave disservice to students throughout California who deserve an authentic Ethnic Studies curriculum, including the disciplinary framing, language, and guidance of the field which is already within it, and which the SBE guidelines below, clearly encourage. We cannot compromise that because of pressure from *outside* communities of color. Fidelity to the field, including by keeping the introductory chapter in the current ESMC draft, and only further signposting, and scaffolding, as necessary, is imperative. We owe it to our current and future teachers of Ethnic Studies, and students throughout California. The following SBE guidelines make this clear:

Promote critical thinking and rigorous analysis of history, systems of oppression, and the status quo in an effort to generate discussions on futurity, and imagine new possibilities.

Include accurate information based on current and confirmed research (from the field of Ethnic Studies)
--

Promote self and collective empowerment;

Promote the values of civic engagement and civic responsibility;

Include information on the ethnic studies movement, specifically the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), and its significance in the establishment of ethnic studies as a discipline and work in promoting diversity and inclusion within higher education;

Engage a range of disciplines beyond traditional history and social sciences, including but not limited to: visual and performing arts, English language arts, economics, biology, gender & sexuality studies, etc.
--

Engage pedagogies that allow for student and community responsiveness, validate students' lived experience, and address socioemotional development;
--

Be inclusive, creating space for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or citizenship, to learn different perspectives.
--

A Review of A Few California Instructional Quality Commissioner Statements, on 9/20/19

~ Especially to help new IQC commissioners with more context from this meeting

Not to remove some of the language.. the X.. Latinx.. but to give it more of a definition maybe as part of the wrap around in the model curriculum... I also think it's important that we consider and work with the original expert advisory committee that was part of that process. I feel and I know the idea of time is now here, that we continue to work with those practitioners since they are our K-12 teachers. They weren't really given sufficient time, ya know, that they have the opportunity to be that Ethnic Studies voice, because they are the voices of our children in the classroom.

~ Commissioner Muñoz

"I've spent a lot of time dealing with many of the issues that people have raised here today and it's interesting to hear them, because there are answers to those issues they've raised.. When you hear young people saying 'this saved my life', it has some significance, in terms of what history does for individuals, and what happens when you're not included in the history at all...

99% of the curriculum is probably pretty good... If you went out and rewrote the whole curriculum again, you'd probably have even more problems than you have right now, so you have to be careful in what you're trying to do... Most folks have said that the vast majority is good... It's interesting after 45 years of hearing the same conversation over and over, I hear it again, and I appreciate that folks are still interested in Ethnic Studies, so obviously it has a real need in the state, in this state particularly and maybe even across the country. So I look forward to the conversations that are there and hopefully I can be of some assistance, on the expert panel, but also here on the IQC.

~ Commissioner & Assemblymember Weber

"First I want to start by saying, that we -- the conversations that we're having; the weight that a lot of this content holds for a lot of individuals including myself is a conversation that hardly any states out there are having, so I first want to applaud everybody from the CDE to the advisory committee, to members of the public that came to speak today, and submitted public comments. This is an important conversation that we're on the forefront of in terms of in our state and on these topics. I also want to recommend that the CDE keep in mind that... the existing curricular frameworks, specifically World History frameworks and US History frameworks, because some of the specific historical events that have been mentioned today, and on online public comment, and some of the foreign policy issues, have been covered in those frameworks. So I think it's important to remember that as we talk about Ethnic Studies, this is a model curriculum that doesn't supplant what's already being taught. And I think a lot of individuals within education and outside of education might not realize the extent to which some particular topics are already being taught. It's important to keep in mind that Ethnic Studies and World History curriculum, students will be receiving both at sometime, so hopefully both will continue to be as inclusive as possible, but just keep that in mind."

~ Commissioner Rustin

"I agree there is a ton of good stuff in here and I think that was acknowledged by many of the folks who read the full curriculum... There have been people who have asked me, is this an antisemitic curriculum? It's not. I don't think that's a fair way to characterize it. I think there were things in the curriculum that were very problematic... I'm heartened when I hear everybody seems to agree that those kind of thing ought to be about and ought to be revised and ought to be a way for us to make sure this is really about mutual understanding and people coming together...

I do continue to believe that this curriculum ought to be centralized on the four key communities of color, but I do think there's a lot of broader stories that can help to contextualize... an opportunity for us to bring in a lot of different stories as we are still focusing on the key stories of the four communities of color. And that's going to be a nuanced thing, and every teacher will have to play that out in their classrooms based on the demographics of their own community and that's going to be tricky...

Ultimately this ought to be about increasing empathy for everybody... If we really understood how much our own family histories -- how similar some of the stories are, you know, the same kind of terrible vitriol, that was launched against the ancestors of Italian American students back in the late 19th century is now being launched against folks coming up from Latin America or elsewhere, I think we just increase our empathy for everyone and have a better understanding of where we're all coming from in our mutual humanity, and so I think that's the beauty of what we're trying to do here with this curriculum, and I really do continue to have a lot of optimism and hope that we will craft something, that will be something that really we can all be proud of, that will help to uplift voices that have been underheard and that will continue to change lives, particularly in those communities that have been so marginalized in our society."

~ Commissioner & Senator Allen

"I want to start appreciating the advisory committee for this model curriculum, crafting it. We also want to appreciate the writers... I understand that Ethnic Studies is not indoctrination. It's history, it's validation; it's rigorous education that leads to college and career and civic engagement... I want to emphasize some of our SBE adopted curriculum principles; 'promote critical thinking, rigorous analysis... systems of oppression and the status quo', highlight 'justice, race, equity, ethnicity, indigeneity'...

We want to make sure our students have the skills to interrogate the systems of oppression, but it has to be done in a way that is inclusive, promote self and collective empowerment, which is one of our guiding principles, and we look forward to working with educators, experts...

There's a lot of good content in our current model curriculum and we want to make sure we broaden that."

~ SBE Member Ortiz-Licon

"And the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, the State Board very much appreciates the diligent, impassioned, and committed work, that brought it to this point. We have a good start. We have a valuable conversation going on that's really engaging everybody...

We're going to be using the coming year very wisely, it's just such important work that we heard from everyone and we want to get this right, we don't want to rush it, we want the document to represent what we have committed to, both with legislation and with our guidelines... Just remember that the model curriculum is a guidance document that will help our students understand society, their peers and themselves, but it's a guidance document to help the adults do the work in the schools as well, and it has to be empowering and inspire empathy...

We know there will be difficult conversations ahead but we're hoping that this will bring all of our colleagues together around the important work. We do have the students' best interest at heart and we will stay committed through the process to full approval of this document. Thank you all for what you've done to this point and also the work coming ahead which we know will be really important and engaging and very thoughtful. Thank you on behalf of the State Board of Education."

~ SBE Board Member Ilene Strauss

"Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition is here to help the consensus building moving forward. All stakeholders who would like to join us in this, please let us know."

**SAVE CA
ETHNIC
STUDIES
COALITION**

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