

To whom it may concern:

Op-ed articles criticizing the proposed curriculum mostly miss a crucial point. They seem to take as given that this curriculum describes a proposed course in Ethnic Studies. But the provided materials make it clear the goal is not to simply provide a semester of consciousness-expanding, perspective-shaping, radical political instruction--the goal, according to the materials provided, is nothing less than a complete reorientation of K–12 education to align with intersectional orthodoxy.

From the introduction:

CHAPTER 1, PAGE 10:

Integrating Ethnic Studies into Existing Courses

While an increasing amount of districts across the state have worked to develop and implement Ethnic Studies courses, there are still many districts that have not been able to offer the course for a multitude of reasons (e.g., budgetary and other infrastructural constraints, resistance to Ethnic Studies, lack of instructional resources and curriculum support, etc.) Consequently, many educators have worked diligently **to include Ethnic Studies concepts, terms, and topics into existing courses**. It is not uncommon to see Ethnic Studies **integrated into History–Social Science courses, including U.S. History, World History, Economics, Psychology, Social Studies, and Geography**. There are also cases of Ethnic Studies being **included in Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and other subject areas**. Another example is that **in math there are courses such as “Am I an Ethnic Statistic” and “Math and Social Justice.”**

...

... this approach ensures that the intersectional lens that Ethnic Studies provides is salient and manifests within various subject areas. Moreover, this approach **further enriches traditional subject areas** by including a range of perspectives that can further elucidate the overall course content.

Grade Level

...Ethnic Studies should be an essential core component of every students’ K–12 education experience.

This is a crucial and widely overlooked feature of the curriculum's mission, the logical underpinnings of its intended radical transformation of K–12 education. You seem to state above that resistance to a stand alone Ethnic Studies course requires you to transform nearly every course into an Ethnic Studies course.

The LA Times as well as a diverse array of commentators and concerned Californians appear bewildered that this curriculum imposes a single, narrow-minded understanding of every socio-political issue, while appearing to reject the possibility of divergent viewpoints--even on issues as wildly divisive and controversial as BDS. If ever there were an opportunity for heterogeneous debate, it would seem to be on the subject of Israel as an illegal apartheid state. Unfortunately,

according to the glossary, the issue is settled. As are many other debatable points. For example, "In a capitalist economy, surplus value (profit) is generated from human labor and everything is commodified." The idea that "everything" is commodified relies on a definition of freedom that is certainly debatable. However, critical thinking and the possibility of differing viewpoints is strictly forbidden by intersectional praxis, if not by the theoretical framework itself.

This approach violates your own stated objectives.

Page 8:

“Christine Sleeter, Critical Education scholar, posits, “rather than being divisive, Ethnic Studies helps students to bridge differences that already exists in experiences and perspectives,” highlighting that division is antithetical to Ethnic Studies.”

Yet the curriculum materials take consistent political stances on a wide variety of specific debate points, and present them not as debate topics but as settled, proven facts; the materials even redefine critical thinking as a process by which students criticize power structures, thus politicizing critical thinking itself. It's hard to imagine how presenting all subject matter through a political lens can be considered anything other than divisive, and how it can avoid producing the very division you highlight as antithetical to your aims.

Offer this as a course; offer this as a series of courses; please reconsider transforming the state's public schools into 12-year political training grounds.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Chris Dickman
Parent, Los Angeles