

**From:** heather Messner  
**Sent:** Monday, February 8, 2021 4:52 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the CTA State Council Badass Teachers Caucus, I am writing in **opposition** to the **current version of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)**, which does not live up to the values, principles and pedagogy of Ethnic Studies. Essential Ethnic Studies terminology, including the definition of race, has been eliminated, incorrectly defined, or moved to the footnotes. The decolonial, anti-racist, and liberatory focus of Ethnic Studies has been buried in an avalanche of vague and contradictory language. And Arab American Studies has been moved from its rightful place in Asian American/Pacific Islander Studies to an “interethnic bridge-building appendix.” We share the anger of our Arab siblings that their history and community has been relegated to an appendix.

As an organization that prioritizes the needs of our community, Ethnic Studies is foundational to the education of our youth.

Our BATs mission includes advocacy of: **equitable student driven policies and systems** that are also equitably funded to meet the needs of **ALL students** and schools, protection of **balanced, student-centered curriculum** which includes, but is not limited to **Ethnic Studies developed with/by local affinity groups, developmentally sound best practices and programs** which augment the experiences of students who experience institutional racism, immigrants and those learning the English language, and **educator-designed policies, standards, and curricula** that are supported by peer-reviewed research, as well as input from experienced classroom experts that includes **voices from BIPOC**.

Ethnic Studies is important to BATs because we believe willful ignorance of each other's cultures is nothing short of apathy and allegiance to white supremacy culture and institutional racism. Learning relevant histories from one another, empowering each other, and reveling in our nation's diversity leads to the dismantling of institutional racism and white supremacy culture where communities work with and for one another, rather than against one another.

We are concerned that the Ethnic Studies educators who wrote the original ESMC have been sidelined, while politicians and lobbyists have wielded the most influence in what revisions get made. The sidelining of the original committee echoes an all-too-familiar experience amongst people of color of having our expertise denied.

We are echoing and uplifting the demands of the Save Arab American Studies Coalition, and taking the lead from Ethnic Studies educators:

- Re-empower experts in the field of Ethnic Studies to decide on revisions to the ESMC that align with the principles, values, and pedagogy of Ethnic Studies.
- Put Arab American Studies—including Palestine—back where it belongs, within the Asian American Studies section of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

- Approve an ESMC that is anti-racist, decolonial and liberatory—that centers the voices and experiences of communities of color and their struggles for liberation.

We call on the CA Department of Education to take immediate action to protect the integrity of Ethnic Studies. We want a curriculum that meets the needs of our youth and carries on the spirit of the original 1968 Third World Liberation Front and Black Student Union strikes that led to Ethnic Studies as a discipline. It is not too late to stand with us on the right side of history and support an ESMC that will educate, protect, and inspire all our children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather C. Messner  
Chair, CTA Badass Teachers' Caucus