

The California Department of Education received 101 submissions that contained the text below. Other identical comments may have been posted separately.

From: Gena Gonzales

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 9:54 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Asian American Ethnic Studies - Public Comment

Dear Tony Thurmond,

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

It has come to my attention that the proposed Sample Lessons and Topics as found in Appendix B of the Ethnic Studies Curriculum does not include a detailed history of the Japanese American community as one of the supplied sample lesson plans. The current draft of the curriculum outline has reduced the Japanese American experience down to a few bullet points under the list of additional sample topics. The lack of a full sample lesson on Japanese American experiences, will mean that those subjects will not be taught by teachers.

The Japanese American community has been an integral part of California history; from the farmers who made the "unfarmable" land flourish with produce, to the activists who challenged the supreme court against the incarceration of 120,000 people based of their race. This story is one that is of tremendous national significance, but is also a very uniquely California story as the majority of Japanese Americans incarcerated during the war had been living in California. Two incarceration sites, Tule Lake and Manzanar are located in California, and especially noteworthy. Even within the listing of additional sample topics, for someone unfamiliar, terms such as Hapa and Gidra may be unidentifiable, and never be covered unless included as a part of a broader lesson on the Japanese American experience.

The current outline also leaves out the Vietnamese American, Korean American, and South Asian American groups as well as many others. I understand that the first draft of sample curriculums also included one on Pan-Asian studies and that has been removed from the most recent draft. I urge you to return that as a sample lesson plan. These are all critical to our Asian American history, and to leave this section out would be a disservice to the children who don't understand what it means to be Asian American. As Asian Americans continue to be the target of racism and often times bullying in schools, maintaining Asian American history in the curriculum, and recognizing the diversity of Asian American experience, is absolutely necessary.

I hope that you will ensure that the sample curriculums provided will be more comprehensive and detailed in its coverage of Asian American diversity.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,
Gena Gonzales
[address redacted]
Gilroy, CA