



November 25, 2019

**State Superintendent
of Public Instruction**

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

DEC 2 2019

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)

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(VICE CHAIRWOMAN)

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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