

From: Stephanie Hernández-Jarvis

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 5:54 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Japanese Americans must be included in the ESMC - [APISBMA] Inclusive AAPI Unit

Dear California Department of Education Instructional Quality Commission,

My name is Stephanie Hernández-Jarvis, and I serve as President of the Board of Education at the West Contra Costa Unified School District. I'm a parent, a teacher, and an advocate for ethnic studies, having earned the American Ethnic Studies Student of the Year Award in 2011 at Santa Barbara City College. That is the place where I first learned about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

Before I went on to study Chicana and Chicano Studies at UC Santa Barbara, I read *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki and James D. Houston, and learned about the internment camps that Japanese families were relocated to and imprisoned in during World War II. I'm an immigrant from México, at the time I learned about these concentration camps on the very soil of the land I was living in, Indigenous Land, I was in disbelief in how this occurred and how I barely found out about it as a young adult.

In decentering the white experience from the way American history, social studies, and ethnic studies are taught, we must also not fail to see how the histories, contributions, stories, and lives of other people of color can be marginalized by not including them in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. We must be as inclusive as possible. High school students should graduate from high school knowing who Fred T. Korematsu was and what his life meant and still means to his family, to his community, to our state, and to our country.

As a Chicana, I want my child and my students to learn about Japanese history (and Asian and Pacific Islander history) just as much as Indigenous, Black, and Mexican, especially because of the very profound stories that connect Japanese families and communities to the roots and history of California. I want the ESMC to include the modern experiences of Japanese Americans, and most importantly, for Japanese American kids to see themselves reflected in the stories taught in the classrooms across our state. I do not want my child to be like me, an 18-year-old barely learning about Angel Island and the important stories of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities that shaped this land to be more equitable, more just, and more welcoming.

The stories of Japanese Americans must be included in the ESMC. Failing to include them will be a disservice to children across the Golden State and to each member of the Japanese American community.

I fully support the Asian Pacific Islander School Board Members Association (APISBMA) position that the following revisions be made to the third draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) to be presented to the IQC in November 2020:

1. Restore lesson plans on Cambodian Americans and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (as a pan-ethnic group) that were present in the July 2019 draft, specifically curricula on:
 - Myths and Realities Surrounding the Asian Pacific Islander American Community
 - Cambodian Americans
 - Deportation Breaking Families Apart

2. At minimum, include additional lesson plans for Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Asian Indian Americans. These ethnic groups represent some of the largest Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) ethnic groups according to 2010 Census data.

The "Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies" unit must offer the foundational overview of the AAPI pan-ethnic identity, include the full spectrum of the AAPI community, and align with the expansive CDE vision imagined in Chapter 3.

I urge you to protect and improve the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum and reach out to AAPI community stakeholders to review lesson content for authenticity and prior to submission to the IQC in November.

Sincerely and in partnership,

Stephanie Hernández-Jarvis
WCCUSD Board of Education