

From: Gregg Henningsen

Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 4:22 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

Dear Members of the CA State Board of Education:

I support education that talks about diversity and the history of different cultures. People should be remembered by what they did in history rather than focusing on their race. The third and final draft of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) is based on critical race theory, which is radical, discriminatory, and a highly controversial theory. I think this hyper focus on race will cause further division among students and create tension between parents and school administrators for increasing division rather than promoting unity.

Critical race theory states that racism is permanent and rejects principles of equal opportunity, neutrality, and objectivity. It divides students by race into oppressor and oppressed groups based on the color of their skin. Rather than recognizing individual attributes or character, students are assigned inherent blame and bias simply because of how they were born. By definition, this is discrimination and bigotry.

On page 18 in Chapter 1, it states, "The instruction, material, or discussion must be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students, and be a fair, balanced, and humanizing academic presentation of various points of view consistent with accepted standards of professional responsibility, rather than advocacy, personal opinion, bias or partisanship." I agree with the statement from Chapter 1 but how do we ensure the material is age appropriate when many topics described are for mature audiences and are not appropriate for Elementary and in many cases Middle School? Who decides what material is appropriate for each grade? I am very concerned that the school will be teaching material not appropriate for the children and that it will present extreme views to children in the early stages of critical thinking.

I am requesting the following changes:

1. Removing the Critical Race Theory ideology that has extreme focus on racism from the Guiding Values and Principles.
2. Replacing the narrow Critical Ethnic Studies language and leading questions that assume a foregone conclusion, with broader constructive language that invites inquiry and analysis from multiple perspectives.
3. Removing the ESMC's second definition of race which calls it "a (neo)colonial... 'master category' (that) break(s) down as people of color (POC) and white people."
4. Deleting all ESMC references to "whiteness," "racial hierarchy," and "racial privilege" as well as race-specific qualifiers preceding the words "supremacy" and "privilege."
5. Removing content that promotes violence or victimhood, or demeans any ethnic group.
6. Replacing the narrow ideological lens that romanticizes any one-sided political, economic, militant, or separatist movement, with a balanced evaluation including both positive and negative sides of the movement or "ism."

Sincerely,
Robert Gregg Henningsen