

September 30, 2020

RE: LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Intersectionality in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Chair Iniquez, Vice Chair Muñoz, and members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

The undersigned organizations represent a diverse group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) and allied organizations advocating for safety, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ and all youth and families in California schools. For years, our individuals and organizations have worked to ensure that the contributions of LGBTQ+ people and the diverse communities to which they belong are represented in curriculum and instructional resources in K-12 classrooms in California. We have been partners in the development of California's instructional standards and frameworks, including the History-Social Science and Health Frameworks, to ensure that these standards are inclusive of California's LGBTQ+ students and aligned with the FAIR Education Act (2011), California Healthy Youth Act (2015), and similar laws. We now write to provide feedback on the new proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum that will be provided to districts and teachers.

One of the stated essential outcomes for ethnic studies teaching and learning is “recognizing intersectionality,” which reflects the lived reality of our communities that race and ethnicity “are not the sole forces affecting personal identity, group identification, and the course of human experience.” (Chapter 1, p. 12, Line 260) An ethnic studies course should provide students with the opportunity to learn about and engage with communities and individuals who belong to multiple identities, including LGBTQ+ communities, “to explore the richness of human experience and to highlight the variations that exist within ethnic diversity.” (Chapter 1, p. 12, Line 274).

We applaud the explicit inclusion of intersectionality as a goal for ethnic studies, however, in reviewing the proposed model curriculum, we do not believe that the current draft yet accomplishes this critical goal. Below we outline our recommendations to ensure this essential content is included:

1. **Intersectionality** - This concept is defined well in Chapter 1 (p. 12, line 260), and its integration into the curriculum should be modeled for educators in other chapters as well. (See the attachment below for detailed recommendations by section.)
2. **LGBTQ+ Inclusion** – Ethnic Studies courses should include diverse portrayals of LGBTQ+ people, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and gender. All instructional materials adopted pursuant to California law must comply with Education Code sections 60040-60045 and 60048 as well as the guidelines set forth in the State Board of Education's *Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content*. The goal of these Standards is to ensure that all instructional materials: “project the cultural diversity of society; instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage; develop a feeling of self-worth related to equality of opportunity; eradicate the roots of prejudice; and thereby encourage the optimal individual development of each

student.” Thus, it is essential not only for LGBTQ+ students of color, but for all students to see LGBTQ+ people of color (POC) portrayed positively in ethnic studies courses.

We strongly recommend that the model curriculum be amended to include more portrayals and examples of LGBTQ+ POC in Appendix B regarding sample lessons. To provide further guidance for educators, we also advise adding several LGBTQ+ related titles in the Chapter 4 bibliography, and including an LGBTQ+ section to Appendix C regarding lesson resources. (See attachment below for detailed recommendations).

3. **Strengthen Guidance for Integration with Content Standards and Curriculum Frameworks** – The current draft of the model curriculum offers some guidance on aligning the curriculum with existing standards and guidance for instructional materials, such as the History-Social Science Framework, and provides selected examples of how instructional strategies or frames from these resources can be connected to ethnic studies. Although this is a good start, it is not enough. For instance, none of these examples address the model curriculum’s goal of intersectionality. We recommend that the model curriculum’s guidance on integration explicitly weave in intersectional examples to better guide districts and teachers. (See attachment below for detailed recommendations)

We enthusiastically support the model curriculum’s intersectional approach to teaching ethnic studies. By incorporating model lessons that focus on LGBTQ+ POC and communities, as well as other communities, an intersectional model curriculum will empower students to understand their own multifaceted identities.

Should you have any questions regarding our recommendations, please contact Chris Records at chris@eqca.org or Rick Oculito at rick@ourfamily.org.

Sincerely,

Equality California
Our Family Coalition
ONE Archives Foundation
ACLU of California
PFLAG National
Gender Spectrum
Latino Equality Alliance
Los Angeles LGBT Center
The LGBTQ Center Long Beach
LGBT Center Orange County
LGBT Community Center of the Desert
The Source LGBTQ+ Center, Visalia
Fresno Spectrum Center
Diversity Center of Santa Cruz County
Safe Schools Project Santa Cruz County
Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center
GLSEN Los Angeles
Merced LGBTQ+ Alliance

Attachment - Detailed Recommendations Regarding LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum for California LGBTQ Organizations

Chapter 3 - Instructional Guidance

We recommend the inclusion of the following language:

Definition of Intersectionality: Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality refers to an analytical framework that views people through the interaction of their social identities (including gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, etc.) resulting in a unique lived social experience of oppression and privilege, as opposed to an additive model of oppression that views people as the sum of their social identities. (Rothenberg, Paula and Accomando, Christina Hsu. *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study* (Tenth Edition). New York: Worth Publishers, 2016.)

Chapter 4 - Bibliography

Additional recommended titles:

Bronski, Michael. *Queer History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Books, 2011.

Bronski, Michael. *A Queer History of the United States For Young People*. Boston: Beacon Books, 2019.

Mayo, Cris, and V. Blackburn, Mollie, eds. 2019. *Queer, Trans, and Intersectional Theory in Educational Practice : Student, Teacher, and Community Experiences*. New York: Routledge, 2020.

Meyer, Elizabeth J. *Gender and Sexual Diversity in Schools*. New York: Springer, 2010.

Romesburg, Don, Ed. *The Routledge History of Queer America*. Routledge, 2018.

Rothenberg, Paula and Accomando, Christina Hsu. *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study* (Tenth Edition). New York: Worth Publishers, 2016.

Rupp, Leila J. and Freeman, Susan K. Eds. *Understanding and Teaching: U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014.

Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (Second Edition). Berkeley: Seal Press, 2017.

Appendix B - Lesson Plans

Several of these lesson plans should be added to the appendix. These could be included in a section labeled “Intersectionality and LGBTQ Identities”

Audre Lorde and Intersectionality (One Archives Foundation) -

<https://www.onearchives.org/lgbtq-lesson-plans/>

Audre Lorde’s letter of multiple identities (Our Family Coalition) -

<http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/through-analyzing-audre-lordes-essay-on-multiple-identities-and-systems-of-oppression-how-do-power-and-privilege-impact-the-relationships-people-have-with-each-other-as-well-as-with-institut/>

Gender Roles in the U.S. (Our Family Coalition) -

<http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/shifting-gender-roles-in-the-us/>

Intersectionality (Our Family Coalition) -

<http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/crash-course-in-intersectionality/>

Teaching at the Intersections (Teaching Tolerance) -

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/teaching-at-the-intersections>

Understanding Gender Identity (Our Family Coalition) -

<http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/understanding-gender-identity/>

Appendix C - Resources

These resources could be added in a section labeled “Resources for Connecting Ethnic Studies with Intersectionality and LGBTQ+ Identities”

Intersectionality TED Talk - Kimberle Crenshaw -

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

Gender Spectrum - <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/educator-resources>

Provides a variety of resources for educators including understanding gender identity with current definitions.

Our Family Coalition / LGBTQ History Lessons - <http://www.lgbtqhistory.org/>

Provides lesson plans related to LGBTQ+ history, identity and gender.

One Archives Foundation LGBTQ History Lessons - <https://www.onearchives.org/education/>

Provides primary sources and lesson plans related to LGBTQ+ history, identity and gender.

Podcast: [Making Gay History Podcast](#). Eric Marcus, New York, 2016-2019.

Provides discussions and resources about LGBTQ+ individuals in history that could be integrated into Ethnic Studies courses.

Podcast: [History is Gay Podcast](#). Leigh Pfeffer and Gretchen Jones, 2018-2019.

Provides insights about LGBTQ+ and identity topics and individuals in history.

Podcast: [Queer America](#). Teaching Tolerance.

Provides academic conversations by historians and professors regarding various LGBTQ+ history and identity topics.