

From: DrMike
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 1:08 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Tony Thurmond ; IQC ; SBE
Subject: Additional comment on ethnic studies draft

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Instructional Quality Commission Members,

This is an addition to my previous submitted comment on the draft Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

As a California resident who has been following the development of the model curriculum for Ethnic Studies, I was and remain deeply concerned that American Jews were not included as an ethnic group or even acknowledged as such in the draft. On July 26th, I requested the recordings from the ESMC Advisory Committee meetings in February, March, and April. I greatly appreciate Ken McDonald's prompt response and sharing of the link to these recordings. Though I did not have the bandwidth to listening to everything (6 days' worth of recordings!), I was deeply dismayed by what I heard, which suggested that the exclusion of Jews (and Armenians) was intentional. The discussion also illustrates that the participants knew that their efforts to exclude were improper. As a taxpayer, I am appalled that the people tasked with developing the model curriculum were driven by personal political agendas and did not follow the excellent ESMC Guidelines, which emphasize inclusion.

In light of the above and in light of the State Board of Education's excellent statement on August 12th that the model curriculum will be "substantially redesigned", I would like to ask that you confirm that the people involved in producing this draft will not be involved in the redesign process and that serious scholars who will put the Guidelines first and be driven by scholarship will be engaged. The advisory committee and writers have demonstrated bias, unprofessionalism, and behavior unbecoming of those selected by or hired by the State for this important task. I hope there will be transparency on the redesign process. I ask that the recordings from those three meetings be investigated and thank you for looking into this matter. I enclose below excerpts from April 25th and April 26th with timecode for easy reference.

Thank you for your time, attention, and commitment to ensuring high quality Ethnic Studies education for all California students.

Sincerely,
Michael Harris
San Rafael

April 25 meeting:

39:40-41:15

"I'll just give a quick writer's comment in that we've stuck to the four core of Ethnic Studies because we too recognize that obviously those four core groups do not encompass everyone and how Ethnic Studies in those areas are being taught doesn't include all the range of experiences, but the minute we take that lid off, it opens up a larger discussion. I think it's happening right now. So also consider that you may have Armenian Americans who want to see their place in this curriculum. You may have Jewish Americans who view themselves as ethnic minorities as well and want to view them self and will come and ask. So we have been using the sort of cloaks of ethnic studies traditionally being taught based around these four core groups and we can provide some language, we can massage some language, to where it includes Pacific Islanders and is inclusive of you know Latinx experiences with Central America, South America, But the minute we uncork that, just recognize you're opening a bit of a Pandora's box and I think that starts to steer us away potentially from sort of the core of what ethnic studies is, so just be mindful, I'm not saying that you know, going and choosing a Pacific Islander course outline and inserting that is wrong, I'm just want you all to recognize that you are creating a precedent for other groups to come in and ask for a piece of the curriculum as well, which is also not bad. But just be mindful."

April 26 meeting:

5:21-5:46

"My one concern is that the purpose is a direct response to specific concerns of representation by Arab American and Pacific Islander communities but that reasoning we do leave ourselves open to other communities that are just like, oh well, we want to be represented as well. That's one of our caveats we need to just make, or like not leave ourselves open like that way because it can become a mess at the IQC level and we don't want that so I need to fix that somehow."

6:21-7:08

"I wonder if you could not make that clearer. I agree totally agree, if you just put the purpose for inclusion of these two-course models. Maybe if you take out that, don't do it yet but maybe if you take out the in addition to the other standalone courses, you can say if you basically take a and say this is a direct response to specific concerns that Asian Americans studies might not represent, or I don't know like may not accurately represent Arab Americans and Pacific Islanders communities something to that effect so that you keep it tied to the fact that it is because it is under the umbrella but I think to Tateka's point, when you have that in addition to the other stand-alone courses, I think that is what opens it up to people...I don't know."

7:17 - 7:39

"It's because of capacity wise and process-wise both here and at the IQC and SBE levels...if it comes up why aren't we here, well, you are right, in a way part of me is like, well everyone should be, ideally we should have all communities represented, but capacity and process-wise is the main reasoning that I'm

just gonna but maybe I am tripping with that.”

7:40-7:47

“I think its um white ethnic communities um that might see themselves as wanting to be part of it at least at that’s what I heard yesterday.”

7:48-7:55

“Armenian American was the example given that it uh could also technically be considered in something.”

7:56-8:08

“So to respond to Samara [hard to hear name]...I think would putting the word black in front of representation support what you just said?

8:09-8:11

“Hmmm, maybe? yeah”

8:20 - 8:54

“I have a recommendation. Do we have to say those words, like I kinda feel like we are telling on ourselves, like to have a red flag, like hey, in case your group is not represented, um now you have an opportunity to say something about it. Do we have to say that can we just say, just leave it at um where it says Arabs and Pacific Islanders and then just leave it at that and not say why we did it but just not say why we did it because our purpose is to include them in the first place so why tell everybody who isn’t represented, you know, now you have a window to complain about that, I don’t know if that makes sense.”

“That makes perfect sense.” (others chime in their agreement as well)

“I am sorry, can I add one thing if that might...because if we have to actually put people of color in the paragraph and that might actually close the discussion around um like any other group, like so people of color groups like right, so instead of represented four core people of color groups. I know that sounds a little clunky but that will close the door to everybody who’s like saying that we can put anybody in there...yeah core people of color and then let’s look at the definition of the people of color to make sure that that’s solid for us so we don’t spend all this time trying to be gatekeepers. We’re not going to be able to do that. People are still gonna put their proposals in...(audible laugh) sorry go ahead.”

10:09

“No I think (inaudible) that’s perfect”