

From: Connie Decena

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:35 PM

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

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Japanese American History - Include Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum - November

Importance: High

Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division
430 N Street, Suite 3207
Sacramento, CA 95814

September 30, 2020

Dear California Department of Education Instructional Quality Commission,

I 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 a 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.

As a mother, Japanese American, and Midori Kai, Inc Director I feel the history of my Japanese American roots is vital to tell the truth and the full history of my parents and their experience and contribution during WWII. I had to supplement my son and daughters missing history with a summer session called Suzume no Gako. I found my roots writing a paper in college for an Administrative Of Justice class where we were studying the Bill Of Rights and The Constitution. My parents were denied these rights written in these documents. They were American citizens born in Coyote and Watsonville, California, but we're required

to report with only what they could carry to be temporarily housed at Fairgrounds or racetracks and eventually transferred to desolate barracks.

My father was a proud member of the 442nd regimental unit and was promoted to Tech Sergeant. My parents met at the Poston II internment camp before my Dad, despite his entire family being interned behind barbed wire and guard towers, volunteered to serve and defend the USA! My Uncle Rudy is pictured holding a U.S.A. flag leading prisoners out found in the LA Japanese American Museum and on books.

I was shocked to find in my high school history class only one picture (guard tower and internment camp) and a paragraph described their entire contribution. I knew my kids needed to understand and know their grandparents contribution in our history. My kids still get an occasional racist gesture or remark, but they know their family history and can feel proud. This needs to change and the history books need to be updated with the entire truth and honest contributions. It is an embarrassing part of American history but as I tell my kids to own their mistakes, apologize, make it right and move on. My parents never held animosity or anger for what they experienced. It was their kids, that finally asked about that period and started making them realize what happened to them was WRONG!! My parents always made the best of their circumstances. My Dad was one of the first auto mechanics allowed in the union and eventually opened his own shop on San Pedro Square in San Jose, CA for 30 years. My Mom became a beautician. They rose against all the obstacles, internment and racism with a quiet and dignified manner. Updating our history books is the right thing to do.

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,
Connie Decena