

**From:** Jeff Moe  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 11:51 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** Feedback on the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Ethnic Studies Committee,

Let me comment on the following excerpt of the Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which is indicative of a weakness in the curriculum:

“In education, what is often called the “achievement gap” between students of different racial backgrounds, is recontextualized by Ethnic Studies as the opportunity gap, and/or what Gloria Ladson-Billings framed as the education debt in her 2006 presidential address to the American Education Research Association. This debt refers to what students of color in the United States are owed after centuries of educational trauma, dehumanization, and enforced sociopolitical, cultural-historical, economic, and moral constraints via the education system. As a field catalyzed by a righteous angst for justice and access to knowledge (rather than merely “closing a gap”), Ethnic Studies intentionally works toward helping pay this education debt.”

I am concerned that the concept that students of color are “owed” an education sends the wrong message. Of course all students should have access to an education, but to learn requires hard work, including, showing up for class, submitting homework on time, studying for tests, and enrolling in challenging courses. A student who wishes to attain an education by passively waiting for what is owed will fail, which could result in frustration and disillusionment.

Let me suggest a different tone for the course; that students of color are made in God’s image and have an important mission and calling. Each student’s contributions are critical for the community and the world.

A look at ethnic history ought to include both stories of success and stories of injustice. That exploration of history can then advise the importance of utilizing grit and determination to attain an education and help make the world a better place.

In conclusion, I recommend that the model curriculum be rewritten with a stronger emphasis on hope and empowerment.

Regards,

Jeff Moe  
School Board Trustee