



August 15, 2019

**Re: The Curricular Integrity of Ethnic Studies -
After 50 Years, Our Discipline & Our Students Deserve It - SUPPORT**

Dear California Instructional Quality Commission and State Board of Education Members,

The curricular integrity of Ethnic Studies must be kept, or it will fail at producing the transformative results it is capable of – we cannot do that to our students.

There is a spectrum of feelings about what is happening now, after receiving the recent August 12th through 15th, SBE, and State Superintendent / Senatorial updates. Ethnic Studies deserves to be honored as the field it is, and our students deserve to be honored as the young intellectuals they are, across California. Ethnic Studies has worked at producing transformative results within this prevalent "achievement gap / opportunity gap / education debt" that our students come to us with. You see, Ethnic Studies is a very intentional and effective way of being honest about what Gloria Ladson-Billings frames as the four dimensions of this education debt in her [Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association \(2006\) – please read if you are unfamiliar with it](#). Further, to compound this debt for students of color, and their experience in an extremely biased K-12 curriculum is what Christine Sleeter called "[Standardizing Imperialism](#)" (2004) - [again please read for her evidence based on the current California History-Social Science State Standards if you are unfamiliar with this research](#).

Though both of the articles just noted originated from outside the field of Ethnic Studies, they are imperative in considering the next stages of the work you are charged with; Dr. Sleeter's National Education Association report on the Social and Academic Value of Ethnic Studies, after all, is the *only* research cited in the AB 2016 legislation, signed into law by Governor Brown the year of its namesake. Further, Christine herself was supportive of the current model curriculum draft in her public comment to the CDE, including its Overview, stating "I am very enthusiastic about this overview, which offers a good deal of depth and thought. It connects the core of Ethnic Studies content with pedagogy, the purpose of Ethnic Studies, and why Ethnic Studies exists and is needed. Well done!". This is the author of the only literature cited in the legislation, let's please listen to her and the Ethnic Studies teacher and professor leaders you selected from throughout California to serve on the ESMC advisory committee, out of approximately 130 applicants, and with centuries of collective classroom experience teaching Ethnic Studies. Please.

Those two articles, already are considered in the draft Ethnic Studies model curriculum, and the *counternarratives* to this K-12 standardized bias are integral to Ethnic Studies. The 2016 HSS-FW even states the importance of counternarratives in Ethnic Studies in Chapter 14; I was there at the SBE ratification of it, and am thankful to the over 50 Ethnic Studies supporters who spoke that day, when we submitted [a petition](#) of over 1,000 signatories for additional critical concepts of Ethnic Studies to be included in the HSS-FW (however, because we were so late in the process, and because of the intense India/South Asia controversy and all the resources it necessitated) - *no* revisions were made that day when it was ratified. This time around, fortunately, Ethnic Studies communities are much earlier in the process (though given, were taken aback by the attacks of the last couple weeks) – and many more are ecstatic about representing for Ethnic Studies this time around.

There are several ways of how to accomplish this curricular integrity in Ethnic Studies, and after the recent SBE and State Superintendent updates, I will reflect, discuss with various communities, and bring my prepared recommendations to your September meeting, if not share them before.

Ethnic Studies has demonstrated results for both students of color and students of all races/ethnicities in the programs, as it moves forward, we must give it a chance to keep its curricular integrity, or it should not be called Ethnic Studies.

I support the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Draft, also have several recommendations to improve upon it, and am possibly open to some redesign for the new October draft, depending upon the direction that redesign may take. The curricular integrity, framing, language, and pedagogy of Ethnic Studies must remain – our students, and fifty plus years of struggle, including sit-ins, rallies, strikes, and hunger strikes, deserve it. Ethnic Studies, in its truest form, is educational justice – and that's why it works for students of color – dilution is not the solution. Please do not set our students and high school Ethnic Studies up for failure, the curricular integrity of Ethnic Studies must remain, I urge you.

Sincerely,

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California Teachers Association / Stanford Instructional Leadership Corps

Pukúu Cultural Community Services, Board of Directors, Education Committee Chair

United Teachers Los Angeles, Ethnic Studies Teacher Representative

Ethnic Studies Now Coalition, Steering Committee Member

[New Book: *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*, at *RethinkingSchools.com*](#)

[New Article: *Ethnic Studies Onward*, in *United Teacher*, May 2019, pgs. 8:19](#)