

From: Ana Jones
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:37 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pacific Island written

Dear IQC Commissioners:

On behalf of Pacific Island Fijian Community, I am submitting comments in response to the current Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I write to express grave concerns regarding the lack of Pacific Islander representation in the latest draft of the ESMC.

I have raised 2 sons in the California Education System and I have never seen a textbook, class project, or elective to highlight Pacific Islanders as a people, the culture, language, or the country in the the K-12 system.

I have served on the Parent Teacher Board for the majority of the 12 years that my sons were in school and was always referred to as "the black mom" to the students, faculty, and staff. I am a black mom because of the dark pigmentation of my skin, I am a black mom because my features and frizzy hair classifies me as being black. What the teachers, students, and faculty do not see is an "Island mom" whose rich heritage and culture has shaped her life and her sense of belonging today. A sense of identity that allows her to stand tall and proud no matter what the world throws at her in this great land of America with the deep undercurrents of racism. Possessing of a language that is just as beautiful in the rhythms and cadences like the blue green oceans that surrounds her place of birth. An "Island Mom" who tried so hard to instill the warmth, love, and values we have as a Pacific Islander, a family, and a village. An "Island Mom" who only wished that if there were only a smidgen of the history for Pacific Islanders in the curriculum would it have instilled in her Fijian American born sons a sense of identity and a sense of belonging? Would it have helped them deal with the issues around mental health in early adulthood? Would it have prevented the tragedy that occurred with the loss of her older college age son to suicide only 2 years ago?

Never has it been more crucial to highlight the Pacific Islander history and culture in the California curriculum. Never has there come a time to take a stand and speak up for our children who are at a loss when discussing issues surrounding Black Lives Matter, because growing up in America has also contributed to the loss of their own language and culture and in a sense a loss of identity.

Learning about the people, language, customs, and traditions allows a glimpse of the beauty and authenticity of the Pacific Islands. Highlighting Pacific Islanders in the curriculum brings color to the otherwise "whitewashed" texts and lessons in our classrooms today.

I urge the CDE Curriculum Team and Instructional Quality Commission to pass an ESMC that includes Pacific Islander and Arab American studies course outlines moving forward and work with the respective communities to ensure this happens. We also demand **that the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) committee of writers and experts be reconvened.** This committee of Ethnic Studies scholars and teachers are the experts on Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact Ana Jones to provide further information

Sincerely,

Ana Jones
Fijian Mom

Ana Jones

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