

From: Mark Yudof
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 7:43 AM
To: Ethnic Studies; Tony Thurmond; [emails redacted]
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission, Superintendent Thurmond, President Darling-Hammond, and Governor Newsom:

I am writing to you from the perspective of one who has spent a lifetime advocating for freedom of expression and equal opportunity to quality education in California and beyond.

The Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) is an opportunity to bring together California's diverse communities and help students to confront racism, engage in civic responsibility, and to participate in the civil discourse that our students need to succeed in school, work, and life.

Core to this effort is a curriculum that is balanced, presents multiple perspectives, requires students to analyze and form conclusions based on evidence, and teaches students "to both understand our increasingly complex society and participate fully in our democratic system" (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016). In our current polarized environment, it is even more crucial for students to engage in rigorous analysis of multiple viewpoints - basing their conclusions on evidence with the goal of becoming informed citizens.

The ESMC gives me serious concerns. In my view the ESMC should take a more pluralistic approach and invite diverse points of view.

The ESMC also falls short on promoting civic engagement through democratic institutions. The Guiding Values and Principles call for students to "conceptualize...post-imperial life that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing" and "connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements ...on the global and local levels." Within the ESMC, resistance is prioritized over civic engagement; struggling against the oppressors is the focus, rather than working as a community to solve problems. It is important for the curriculum to specify what type of resistance is encouraged and to value civic engagement and democratic processes.

In order to achieve Ethnic Studies goals of "promot(ing) critical thinking and rigorous analysis of history," the ESMC's Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC must be based on sound pedagogy, devoid of political bias, and encourage open inquiry and robust debate. To that end, the Guiding Values and Principles should be rewritten so that California can achieve the goal of AB2016: "preparing pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures."

I appreciate your efforts and revisions to create a meaningful, inspiring, high quality Ethnic Studies curriculum for all students.

Mark G. Yudof