

From: Maddie Carmel
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 8:50 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Cc: Tony@tonythurmond.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC

Dear State Board of Education Members:

I am writing to you as a retired teacher, a California resident, and a grandmother of ten school aged children who has done due diligence going through both the first and second drafts of the ESMC. I have also researched each of your backgrounds and know that all of you have devoted your lives to education and have the credentials and accolades to show for it. So I find it incredulous that you would consider approving this deeply flawed document.

Although the second draft is much improved from the first, it is still highly problematic for the following reasons:

Having read the Guiding Values and Principles, I find they are far more inflammatory than they appear at first glance.

There are the footnotes about critiquing capitalism, patriarchy, hegemony, etc. that are an integral part of the ESMC Values and Principles and have significant effect on the lesson plans. Please see the FULL version of Principles 4-7 including footnotes, below, as they are particularly problematic.

Second, you should be aware of the meanings of references embedded in the *Guiding Values and Principles*, raising both Marxist and antisemitic concerns. For example, in Principle #6, “*true Democracy*” is a synonym for communism. It’s a Marxist term for the elimination of private property, and this principle is calling for connection to “resistance movements that struggle for... truer democracy.”

People I know who fled Marxist-socialist oppression in the former Soviet Union immediately noticed the frightening implications of principles 4-7. In addition to clarifying the meaning of “true democracy,” they stated in their letter to the CDE, “We are dumbfounded by a curriculum (in both drafts) that consistently elevates Socialism, Marxism, and Communism as THE way students are encouraged to become socially responsible. Based on this ideology, in the first draft, resistance is described not as a range of actions that can affect social change, but specifically as “a move towards dismantling a system,” and is mentioned 112 times. “Revolution” is mentioned over 50 times.” They go on to express concerns that in the ESMC, communism is always benign and capitalism is always criticized. This is from people

who have not only read the ESMC, but have lived the kind of discrimination and oppression the ESMC is supposed to be combating.

Some of the Guiding Values and Principles directly reference, and are based on, specific pages from a book called *Education at War*. The relevant section of the book encourages teachers to “develop solidarity and create linkages” with anti-Zionism, BDS, and anti-Israel narratives. One of the ESMC's guiding values is connecting to "resistance movements that struggle for social justice on the global and local levels" -- language which can easily be twisted to justify promoting BDS and antisemitic hate in the classroom, in violation of AB331!

Third, please see the chart below comparing the ESMC's principles 4-7 to the Los Angeles Unified School District's matching neutral principles for Ethnic Studies. The ESMC's promotion of a narrow political agenda stands in stark contrast to LAUSD's neutral and balanced principles.

The ESMC includes political dogma of "critiquing empire building and ... capitalism," challenging "imperialist colonialist beliefs," "connecting to resistance movements" and "post-imperial" "transformative resistance." This ideology is laid on top of the neutral ethnic studies curriculum, which seeks to “value diversity, manage the dynamics of differences” and “focus on the experiences, histories, cultures, struggles and accomplishments of specific ethnic / racial groups within American history.”

<p>ESMC's political</p> <p>Guiding Values & Principles</p>	<p>LAUSD's neutral</p> <p>Guiding Principles</p>
<p><u>Critique empire-building in history</u> and its relationship to white supremacy, racism [<u>patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism</u>] and other forms of power and oppression</p>	<p><u>Promote critical thinking about the complexity of the intersections of race with gender, class, sexuality and other systems of difference that have power effects and result in privilege.</u></p> <p>Teach students to <u>understand the concepts of intersectionality, power, privilege and/or oppression</u> in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Their own **identities as human beings and acknowledging their ancestral roots. o The complexity and diversity of the American experience

<p><u>Challenge imperialist/colonial</u> [and <u>hegemonic</u>] <u>beliefs</u> and practices on multiple levels [Ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized]</p>	<p><u>Examine how race and ethnicity have been constructed</u> in the United States, have changed over time, and continue to shape the country today (History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 2016).</p>
<p>Connect ourselves to past and contemporary <u>resistance movements</u> that <u>struggle</u> for social justice on the global and local levels to ensure a <u>truer democracy</u>^[1]</p>	<p>“Teach students about <u>social justice</u> and <u>social responsibility</u>, and to understand that they can become <u>agents of change</u> at local, state, national, and global levels.”</p>
<p>Conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for <u>post-imperial</u> life that promotes collective narratives of <u>transformative resistance</u>, <u>critical hope</u>, and <u>radical healing</u>.^[2]</p>	<p>Focus on the <u>experiences, histories, cultures, struggles and accomplishments</u> of specific ethnic/racial groups within American history and society, with an emphasis on <u>truth and healing through empathy</u> and education.</p>

It's the political ideology baked into the ESMC Values and Principles which makes seminal leaders like John Lewis, Martin Luther King, and Thurgood Marshall outside the bounds of this curriculum. In fact Lewis is referenced only negatively in this curriculum as "passive" and "docile." In contrast, ESMC principles embrace revolutionary leaders like Mumia Abu-Jamal (Marxist advocate who murdered a police officer), numerous Black Panther leaders (all self-professed Revolutionary Socialists or Communist activists), Oscar López Rivera (led Marxist-Leninist organization responsible for 100 bombings in US cities), and Lolita Lebrón (led armed assault on the US House of Representatives, wounding 5 congressmen). While the second draft of the ESMC no longer specifies these figures, the Values and Principles resulting in their praise have not been changed, and the topics that lead to their discussion are also still included.

The ESMC Values and Principles also embrace antisemitic leaders like Clara Muhammed, Malcom X, Amy and Marcus Garvey, Reies Lopez Tijerina, anti-Zionist / pro-BDS leaders like Helen Thomas and Linda Sarsour, antisemitic groups such as Hebrew Israelites, Nation of Islam, and web links to groups promoting BDS and anti-Zionist material. All were included in the first draft.

So yes, I have read the ESMC Principles, and the rest of the document very carefully. The more I read, the more alarming they are. It doesn't matter whether it's indoctrination on the right or left. ANY one-sided political indoctrination is in direct conflict with the History-Social Science Framework (HSSF) for California Public Schools, 2016, and the Common Core State Standards 2010. HSSF states that curriculum must include "A balance of topics, authors, and concepts, including primary and secondary sources that represent multiple, and sometimes opposing, points of view or perspectives." This type of inquiry is not part of the ESMC Guiding Values and Principles.

Last year both Tony Thurmond and Governor Newsom said that the first draft would not see the light of day, and the second draft should not as well. Since this is going to be the curriculum for years to come, it is essential that you get this right or we're going to be raising generations of children who will be fed a one sided Marxist we vs. them ideology. I certainly hope all of you have done your due diligence in reviewing this curriculum and have read all the critiques that you've received. I'm appealing to your better angels to fix this extremely damaging and problematic current draft.

I urge you to make sure you fully understand the actual implication of the ESMC Guiding Values and Principles. The CDE needs to remove or significantly revise them.

Respectfully,

Madelyn Carmel

[1] "True Democracy" is a synonym for communism. It's a Marxist term for the elimination of private property. *The Young Marx on Constituent Power and True Democracy* by Mikkel Flohr <https://forskning.ruc.dk/en/publications/the-young-marx-on-constituent-power-and-true-democracy>

[2] Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales and Edward Curammeng, "Pedagogies of Resistance: Filipina/o Gestures of Rebellion Against the Inheritance of American Schooling," *Education At War: The Fight for Students of Color in America* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2018), 233–238.

