



Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee

TO: Instructional Quality Commission Members

FROM: Dr. Tricia Gallagher-Geurtsen
Chair, San Diego Unified School District Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee

RE: Public Comment, ITEM 2.A. Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

August 10, 2020

Dear Instructional Quality Commission Members,

On behalf of San Diego Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee we write to express our concern and share our asks related to the July 2020 released draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC).

It is clear from our review of the draft that the work of the original authors and advisors of the ESMC and their careful attention to ensuring the draft was tightly aligned to the "Ethnic Studies Guiding Principles" has been lost. Without attention to ensuring the Guiding Principles are adhered to throughout the ESMC, the current draft cannot be called Ethnic Studies.

It seems that the current draft is guided by "Eight Outcomes" that water down Ethnic Studies centering the curriculum on vague multiculturalism and the current social science-history framework, effectively rendering the curriculum not ethnic studies.

Troublingly, the newly released draft excludes critical segments of the current Ethnic Studies community, namely Arab American and Pacific Islanders. Both groups must be included.



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Additionally, the Native American portion of the Model Curriculum is poor quality and written from the traditional Euro-centric view of indigenous heritage as well. The draft needs to be re-written by Native Ethnic Studies practitioners and scholars.

The draft also avoids critiques of systemic intersectional racism, a central tenet of Ethnic Studies. Without this criticism the structures and systems that perpetuate injustice cannot be addressed. This criticism should be present in all sample units and lessons with examples of social movements led by people of color that have addressed systemic injustices.

The well-documented benefits of Ethnic Studies will only be reached if state leaders and the ESMC adhere to the disciplines of Ethnic Studies with fidelity. We believe it is the duty of the Commissioners of the Instructional Quality Commission to ensure that the ESMC is Ethnic Studies.

Dr. Tricia Gallagher-Geurtsen

Chair, San Diego Unified School District Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee