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Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 4:19 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum still needs a major rewrite

"Ethnic Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses many subject areas including history, literature, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. It emerged to both address content considered missing from traditional curriculum and to encourage critical engagement." As noted in the 2019 draft, Ethnic Studies has created a space for all students to learn about and analyze their identities and histories, feel proud of them, and actualize their full humanity.

I'm not convinced this curriculum meets this objective.

It is very difficult and time-consuming to decipher what changes have been made to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) since the August review period, so I will limit my comments.

It was my understanding that the California Department of Education (CDE) ordered a new draft to the ESMC in 2019. Officials pledged to limit the curriculum to the four traditional Ethnic Studies groups (African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latinx Americans) and to eliminate any anti-Semitic and anti-Israel content.

The second ESMC draft released at the end of July 2020 was restricted to the four groups. It is surprising and disappointing that after the August 2020 review period, the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) reinserted a lesson plan on Arab Americans within the Asian American curriculum. In addition, it is unconscionable that the same anti-Semitic and anti-Israel bias that was eliminated from the 2019 draft was still found in this lesson plan. This lesson plan is unacceptable to the "... objective of preparing pupils to be global citizens with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures, will close the achievement gap, reduce pupil truancy, increase pupil enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and increase graduation rates" and should be eliminated as agreed upon.

"As a field, Ethnic Studies seeks to empower all students to engage socially and politically and to think critically about the world around them. It is important for ethnic studies courses to document the experiences of people of color in order for students to construct counter-narratives and develop a more complex understanding of the human experience. Through these studies, students should develop respect for cultural diversity and see the advantages of inclusion. (chapter 1 lines 54-59)

Officially, the United States Census Bureau (as well as University of California and most job applications) does not define Arab Americans as "people of color". The Bureau defines people "having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa" as white people.

"Furthermore, the field presents an opportunity for different cultures to be highlighted and studied in a manner that is meaningful and can be transformative for all students. Ethnic Studies provides students with crucial interpersonal communication strategies, cultural competency, and equity driven skills that are integral to civic engagement and collegiality, especially in a society that is rapidly diversifying." (chapter 1 lines 83-87)

Any curricular model that is to be developed and utilized should strive to accomplish this objective.

It still seems that instead of helping students increase their self-awareness and tolerance by learning about each other's cultures, customs, and religions, parts of these model curriculums seem hostile. They should be modified to eliminate the portions that are intolerant, bigoted, anti-Semitic, anti-LGBTQ, or promote Hinduphobia or Islamophobia.

The revised CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum still needs a major rewrite before approval by the CA Legislature.

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