

From: Catherine Presher
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:01 AM
To: Ethnic Studies; [email redacted]; Tony Thurmond
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Remove Political Agenda from CA Ethnic Studies

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education and California Legislators,

As a proud Latino Californian, I am deeply concerned that the draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum continues to promote an offensive, one-sided political ideology, and encourages our children to view themselves as victims rather than leaders.

We came to the United States to pursue a better life, and succeeded through hard work. I believe that the proposed curriculum is anti “the American dream.”

My major concerns are:

- 1) The curriculum should teach young minds how to succeed in a new endeavor, rather than focus on why they can't. The four "I's" of oppression, as a course focus, dissuades students who feel O.K from voicing their feelings. Latinx students should be allowed to feel empowered to succeed. The curriculum should include stories of thriving under the existing system, as there are many. Success stories should be included in both the sample agendas and in the resources.
- 2) The curriculum needs to modify its guiding principles to clearly state that more than one perspective be included. For example, it is wrong to showcase violent forms of protest and not present and support examples of creating change by working within the system.
- 3) The curriculum sample agendas use cases that are 40 years old (El Salvador - 1980). This is history. What is happening now? If the Latinx section is going to discuss the migration of Central Americans to the US, it should address the reason for it - the wars caused by the influence of the USSR and its push to spread communism in Latin America, how farmers were displaced, starving the population, and rendering the people incapable of self-sustaining, economic activity. It should talk about the opportunity they found here. The curriculum attacks capitalism, but many in our community believe that capitalism offers the most opportunity to improve our lives and those of our community.

I urge you to make significant changes to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the approach of the ESMC, including the Guiding Values and Principles, to remove any political agenda, build bridges of intergroup understanding, and ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles and balanced approach.

Thank you,
Catherine Presher
San Francisco