

From: Cheshire, Tamara

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To: IQC <IQC@cde.ca.gov>; Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>; Superintendent <Superintendent@cde.ca.gov>; SBE <SBE@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding the Native American Studies segment of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum July 2020 Draft

August 12, 2020

Dear State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond;
President Linda Darling-Hammond and members of the State Board of Education;
Members and staff of the Instructional Quality Commission at the California Department of Education and Members of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee;

We were just made aware of changes to the July 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), and we respectfully oppose the latest draft as released by the California Department of Education because in its revision, it excludes communities of color including Cambodian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Arab and Asian Americans as a Pan Ethnic group and the removal of a lesson from African American Studies as well as, for our focus the removal of sections of the Native American Studies lessons. All of these items were included prior to the June 2019 draft.

As Native American scholars and professors who have taught Native American Studies at California State University, Sacramento and Sacramento City College, respectively; we would like to point out that the Native American Studies unit is insufficient to assist teachers in building Ethnic Studies courses and we advocate for revisions before the curriculum proceeds statewide.

Upon our review of the Model Curriculum, it is clear that there are a number of issues. The current draft of the curriculum as it is written, perpetuates racism through reinforcing the colonial perspective with the same dated stereotypes and reintroduces colonial trauma to (preK-12) Native American students in the classroom. The Ethnic Studies theoretical foundation, which places the ethnic group of focus from the margin to the center of discussion (author bell hooks) is absent. Guiding values of Ethnic Studies addresses each ethnic group's experience of oppression to promote a shared understanding and creates allies to make broad societal change.

A 'Place Based' approach is not new to Native American Studies. We begin every class, no matter where we are, by recognizing the Native American people of the area in which we teach, work and live. This is manifested in the Land Acknowledgment statement. There are multiple pedagogical reasons for this action. It is disheartening and painful, the curriculum is written in this way to only include a few of the 115 California tribes are listed in the appendix and one specifically, the 'Miwok' who are a local tribe have been excluded. To date there are

approximately 115 California recognized tribe with many more unrecognized. In the United States there are over 560 federally recognized tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs). In addition, after review of the draft curriculum, it was evident that some names of tribes were incorrectly listed or misspelled.

There is only one lesson plan that references a California Native American tribe. Because of the diversity of tribes in the state, there should be several 'place based' lesson plans written by respective tribal representatives in northern, central and southern California. In addition, there should be a consistent theme to recognize a California Native American land acknowledgement statement. Many of the colleges in California (CSU's, UC's and Community Colleges) have adopted Native American land acknowledgment statements.

In the most recent draft of the curriculum, the 'Native American experience' is given through the perspective of a historical lens, without recognizing the current California Native American people of today. California is a unique state in that there was a massive genocide that occurred due to the "gold rush era" and the removal of Native communities. Native American Studies focuses on connecting the past to present issues addressing the effects of oppression, perpetuated by colonial created systems of government, law, social services, health care, and education in order to make much needed change to those systems. The ESMC draft needs to address the following:

- 1) the use of a dietary lesson plan specifically meant for Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x Studies;
- 2) the re-traumatizing effects of showing video clips of Native mascots without thorough explanation to Native American students;
- 3) cultural appropriation vs. California Native American tribal traditions;
- 4) ways for diverse populations to become allies.

The use of the dietary lesson in the current draft attempts to condense two distinct ethnic groups by focusing on their Indigenous connections, but in doing so it alienates both groups because the focus of Native American Studies is not Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x Studies and vice versa. By combining these groups, you are not recognizing their unique experiences, nor the diverse types of oppression each has encountered and continues to experience in today's society. For example, tribal sovereignty, land rights and treaties are one primary focus of Native American Studies that is not included in Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x Studies and it would be an important focus in a Native American dietary/ecology and foodways lesson plan.

In reference to the Mascot lesson plan, there is potential to re-traumatize or trigger Native American students by bringing up a painful history with no way or no plan of action to address student feelings and emotions within the classroom. Critical note: the questions associated with this specific lesson plan must be revised.

Finally, additional recommendations should cover the following topics: tribal culture, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Relocation, Sovereignty, Marshall Trilogy, Dawes Allotment Act, Indian Education Act, Indian Appropriations Act, California's 18 Unratified

Treaties, the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal governments, economic development and current issues facing Indian country today.

It is evident that California Native American tribal leaders, educators and teachers must be consulted prior to the adoption of the ESMC. The model curriculum draft for Ethnic Studies should include the consultation of California Indian tribal leaders, Indian Education Officers, Native American Studies professors who teach throughout the state, school board members, educators and representatives from Native American organizations. It is our hope to work in unity to apply our knowledge and best practices for the adaptation of a successful Ethnic Studies Model curriculum.

Respectfully,

Dr. Crystal Martinez – Alire
Enrolled Member & Former Chair of Ione Band of Miwok Indians
Board Member VP Trustee of Elk Grove Unified School District
CSBA Director-At-Large, American Indian
Counselor, Los Rios Community College
[email redacted]

Dr. Tamara Cheshire
Tribal Affiliation: Lakota
Anthropology Assistant Professor Folsom Lake College
Anthropology Lecturer California State University, Sacramento
[email redacted]