

From: Crystal Martinez-Alire

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 3:32 PM

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

Cc: [email redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding the Native American Studies segment of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum August 20 Draft

September 30, 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;

As Native American educators, scholars and community

members from the Sacramento Native American Higher Educational Collaborative (SNAHEC)

we respectfully oppose the latest draft (August 13, 2020) of the Ethnic Studies Model

Curriculum (ESMC) as released by the California Department of Education. We acknowledge

the hard work of the committee, however, we strongly feel 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 current draft of the curriculum,

we find that a 'place based' foundation is missing. In addition, there are issues with the way in which the current lesson plans are written in that they perpetuate racism through false

narrative which reinforces the colonial perspective with the same dated

stereotypes and reintroduces and perpetuates unresolved grief and historic trauma in (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

(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.

As stated earlier, the curriculum should

have a 'place based' approach and focus on the history and information about the

110 California

tribes, some of which are listed in the appendix of the ESMC. There is only one lesson plan that

references a California Native American tribe. To our surprise, the 'Miwok' who have several

bands in and around the Sacramento region, have been excluded completely

and the current draft curriculum incorrectly lists and has critical spelling errors of several local

California Native American tribes. Because of the diversity of tribes in the state, there should

be several 'placed based' lesson plans written by respective

tribal representatives in northern, central and southern California.

In the most recent draft of the curriculum, the 'Native American experience' is given through the perspective of a historical lens, without recognizing the contributions of current California Native American people of today as in Sample Lesson 13, Lesson Steps/Activities 2a and 2b. It is important to reference current tribal leaders.

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.

It is evident that California Native American tribal leaders, educators and teachers must be consulted prior to the adoption of the ESMC. It is our recommendation that a standing advisory commission consisting of Native American tribal leaders,

Indian Education Officers, Native American Studies professors who teach throughout the state, school board members, educators and representatives from Native American organizations help guide changes, updates, and revisions of the curriculum throughout its existence within California public schools. 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,

Sacramento Native American Higher Education Collaborative
(SNAHEC) Members listed below:

Crystal Martinez-Alire, Ed.D.

Faculty, Los Rios Community College District/Enrolled

Miwok

Trustee, Elk Grove Unified School District

Prof. Jesus Valle

English Department, American River College

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Athalia Chamberlain

Sacramento County, Department of Human Assistance

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Melissa Leal, Ph.D.

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