



Board of Supervisors

City and County of San Francisco

**MATT HANEY
DISTRICT 6**

September 5, 2019

California Department of Education
1430 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Honorable California State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Board of Education President, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond:

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment regarding your recent decision to end the current effort to revise the existing draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC).

As the former President of the San Francisco Board of Education I have led initiatives to better support students of color who have often felt marginalized, especially when critical decisions about their education are being made. After talking with students and their families they've expressed deep concerns to me about feeling unrepresented in the classroom curriculum. Their stories are missing in textbooks where the rich culture and history of their community is blatantly ignored. It is incredibly vital that we support the ESMC so that all children understand that everyone's history is equally important.

The committee members, co-chairs and writers of the ESMC stand by their drafted document, but also understand that a principal value of this work is to incorporate feedback, be inclusive of discussion and viewpoints, and address things from a perspective of inclusivity. The narrative that the ESMC is anti-Semitic and/or an erasure of the Jewish experience in the United States is misguided and wrong. I ask that you reconsider your opposition to the established process and allow for revisions that align with the purpose of AB 2016 and respect the tremendous effort put into the 550+ page draft document by the 18 members of the committee, the co-chairs, three writers and support staff from the California Department of Education (CDE).

As we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the field of Ethnic Studies, we emphasize that Ethnic Studies centers the experiences and viewpoints of people of color within, as well as beyond, the United States. San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is committed to honoring this long-standing mission. While Ethnic Studies acknowledges that Jewish, Armenian, Irish, Italian, and other European ethnic groups have undergone oppression and marginalization at various points in their history in the United States, it is critical that we examine how the role and function of "whiteness" has played in their assimilation into American society, while simultaneously excluding ethnic groups of color.



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Ethnic Studies was created to address the long-standing omissions and misrepresentations of the narratives of Native Americans, African Americans, Latinx and Asian Americans in the United States. Given the histories of these communities, it is imperative that these perspectives remain the central focus of the field.

While there are tremendous challenges to the creation of a single resource that speaks to all communities of color in California, we urge you to protect the process and to allow for the draft to be completed. White supremacy has historically and continues to be prevalent in the United States, and throughout the world. Our children and youth must be equipped with the knowledge, skills and sensibilities to identify systems of oppression and then powerfully respond with solidarity in defense of democracy and humanity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Haney", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Matt Haney
Supervisor, District 6
San Francisco Board of Supervisors