



Rantz: Seattle Schools document say math is oppressive, US government racist

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Is math racist? Apparently it is according to a new Seattle Schools course. (Pexels)

Two plus two may equal four, but if the student says five, you better not correct them, oppressor! Math, in Seattle schools, will become a social justice course. But that's not all. The U.S. government will be posited as a racist institution that must be destroyed. If this is taught to students, it's indoctrination at its most destructive.

['Math Ethnic Studies Framework' promotes the wrong kind of division](#)

An Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee (ESAC), under the Seattle Public Schools Superintendent, published a [preliminary Math Ethnic Studies framework document](#) populated by district representatives that explains math as a racist study used to oppress students — and if you correct a student's faulty math logic, you're guilty.

Math is racist

The framework, created by various statewide districts, tackles four themes, including Power and Oppression and History of Resistance and Liberation.

At its core, the belief seems to be that “western” math is viewed as the only “legitimate expression” of math identity and that it’s used to “disenfranchise people and communities of color” and, consequently, it “erases the historical contributions of people and communities of color.”

None of this has anything to do with the math you should learn in K-12; these are topics left for a progressive college course you’d likely see at Evergreen State College.

The framework asks, “Where does Power and Oppression show up in our math experiences?” It wonders, “Who gets to say if an answer is right?”

Apparently, math is now subjective. Who are you to insist two plus two equals four? It goes on to ask “Who is Smart? Who is not Smart?” Answer: the person who says two plus two equals five is not yet smart and should be corrected, even if you think it oppresses them.

The framework believes math is manipulated to allow inequality and oppression to persist. They ask, “Who is doing the oppressing?” I think the answer is supposed to be the white, cis-gendered, heterosexual Christian man.

They ask, “How has math been used to resist and liberate people and communities of color from oppression?”

Ironically, if you subscribe to this social justice world view of math, and teach anyone that there’s no such thing as correct answers, you will be doing immeasurable and, yes, oppressive, harm to students.

History revised

These radical educators aren’t just looking to redefine the study of math. They seem ready to use history courses to present an aggressively progressive worldview, using socialist activist Howard Zinn teachings to indoctrinate kids.

The U.S. History Ethnic Studies Framework insists “the United States government was founded on racist intellectual premises and economic practices that institutionalized oppression of people of color that continues to the present day.”

The document does not hide their goal of demonizing capitalism as exploitative and oppressive. They present mass incarceration as “the New Jim Crow” and want students to

understand that “Europeans brought the dominant worldview values of “guns, the bible, private property and social hierarchy, and racial supremacy.”

Reasonable people can certainly argue that history has been whitewashed and we’d all benefit from a more holistic approach to how contemporary society has been shaped. But this document of possible recommendations goes way beyond that. This would be teaching an ideological perspective; this isn’t teaching history.

Seattle Public Schools responds

The ESAC is made up of a number of educators and was created due to a legislature mandate to “advise, assist, and make recommendations to the office of the superintendent of public instruction regarding the identification of ethnic studies materials.”

The committee will meet throughout the next year in order to meet a September 1, 2020 deadline to offer up their final recommendations. The Superintendent’s office notes that the document is a review of the work done by districts so far, but not necessarily a finalized recommendation list, which isn’t yet due.

[New Seattle school dress code affirms expression](#)

“The Committee thought it was important to review work that has already been done,” Kate Payne, Director of Communications from the Superintendent’s Office. “The materials posted to our ESAC webpage were created by school districts around our state, and the Committee intends to review them as they the work move forward.”

“In creating a state-level framework and recommended resources, we hope to provide guidance to districts implementing Ethnic Studies as part of their class offerings. Again, the Committee has not yet created any documents, nor have they made any recommendations. They are in the process of gathering information about current practices and deciding on the best course of action to ensure our students and educators receive appropriate support. This is an elective class offering, and there are no requirements that school districts offer Elective Studies courses at this time.”