

From: **Alex Kon**

Date: Sat, Aug 10, 2019 at 1:27 PM

Subject: Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

To:

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

As a pediatrician, the parent of two children currently in public education in California, a life-long Californian raised in California public schools, an educator for the past 20 years, and a University of California professor, I am quite frankly appalled by the biased, anti-Semitic, poorly-conceived Draft 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

I agree that teaching ethnic studies is appropriate, however any such education needs to be based in fact not personal biases. I had heard that the model curriculum was anti-Semitic, however I assumed folks were blowing things out of proportion so I read the draft model curriculum myself. Wow. It is shocking that this was posted on the California Department of Education website. It should have been better screened and correct before public posting. I am, quite frankly, shocked.

There are so many aspects of the draft that are inappropriate. As you know, there are more hate crimes each year against Jews than against Muslims, yet while there are African-American and Arab study sections, there is no Jewish study sections. There is one-sided presentation of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction Israel movement, but no presentation of the Jihad, which aims to kill all Jews and wipe Israel off the map (direct quotes from Hamas, Iran, etc.). Any balanced education on the Arab-Jewish problem and the plight of the Palestinians would need to include clear education about the statements of the Palestinian authority and governments of Arab countries regarding their goal to exterminate the Jewish people. Any discussion of the Israeli-occupied territories would need to include discussions of the 6-Day War and the Yom Kippur War when Arab countries attacked Israel in an attempt to wipe it off the map and the subsequent need for Israel to ensure its safety. These are highly complex issues, and providing a one-sided view (either pro-Arab or pro-Israel) is inappropriate and dangerous. To not include a section on Jewish Americans, one of the largest minority populations in our country, is frankly appalling and signals an underlying anti-Semitic bias in the curriculum. There is significant discussion of the plight of African-American slaves and how the slave culture influenced (and continues to influence) African-American culture, yet Jews were slaves for centuries, were restricted from owning property in the U.S. (indeed, Jews could not own property in La Jolla until the 1960s), were initially not allowed to vote in the U.S., and those experiences shaped Jewish culture yet there is no Jewish studies section. This is unacceptable and biased.

I urge the Commission to make major revisions to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others. If this anti-Semitic curriculum is adopted, I will be uncomfortable continuing to send my children to public school. There is already far too much anti-Semitic sentiment and rhetoric in America, we do not need our public schools fueling the fire.

Sincerely,  
Alexander A. Kon, MD, HEC-C, FAAP, FCCM  
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Registered California voter  
Educator for over 20 years in the UC system  
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