

From: Ken Rutsky
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 2:44 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Major concerns with Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

While I appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), I am deeply concerned with the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this still highly flawed and misguided draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Among my major concerns

ESMC guiding values and principles need revision because they are the basis of each unit and lesson plan. They:

- o do not reflect California's shared values, nor the values laid out in AB 2016
- o advocate a narrow political philosophy
- o establish an "us vs them" agenda
- o partly based on the book Education at War, which encourages "solidarity" and

"linkages" with BDS, and anti-Israel narratives, harmful to many Jewish students

Takes a one sided political stand that is inherently anti-semitic by internationally recognized principles of anti-semitism known as the [IHRA standard](#) and adopted and approved by the State Department and supported by both political parties.

Includes references to Jews that are misleading and offensive. To fix this the curriculum must

- o Remove links to, and group advocacy of, virulently anti-Israel pro-BDS sites with malicious slander about imaginary genocide
- o Include Mizrahi and other Jews of color
- o Add a definition of antisemitism to address various contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, including stereotyping and double standards against Jews and Jewish institutions from all parts of the political spectrum.
- o Add specific lesson materials on antisemitism as a form of racism and bigotry

I am a Jewish parent of both high school, middle and college age children in public California institutions. To think that this curriculum will tell my children that their faith is an oppressive one that is an ethnic offender, is beyond the pale of my imagination. Already, language like this forces Jewish college students to be hesitant about embracing their identity publicly, and to think of this fear and bigotry filtering to the high school level is beyond what I would ever imagine. My parents generation was born into the Holocaust, the greatest ethnic cleansing attempt of all time. This curriculum as proposed would be a stain on the great state of California for generations to come.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,

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Taxpayer and Public school and university supporter and parent

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