

From: Jill Blair
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 3:13 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: TThurond; Jill Blair
Subject: Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

As a parent of a recent California public high school graduate, an American born Jew and a US citizen, I am deeply troubled by how the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) for California public schools addresses the history and experience of Jews and how it either deliberately or ignorantly confuses the politics of a nation state (Israel) with the ethnic and religious identity and expression of a people. I am an avid supporter of having an ethnic studies curriculum that provides students with a deep and complete appreciation of the great diversity of our nation and world – an education that encourages us to be our better selves in valuing differences and finding our common bonds. Troubling as well, is the omission by the ESMC of the reality of antisemitism and the threat it represents not just to American Jews but to ALL people who reside on the margins of any majority. Anti-Semitism is as dangerous to Muslims as Islamophobia is to Jews precisely because hatred does breed hatred. We should use the curriculum to take a stand against intolerance and othering of ALL kinds.

Finally, the one-sided framing of the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the ESMC sets the stage for children to adopt stereotypes and make assumptions about political beliefs and loyalties based on ethnic or religious identities. I would ask you to revise the curriculum to be consistent with the recommendations proffered by the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

Please halt the presses and the revisions necessary to produce the best possible educational instrument for teaching tolerance, love and appreciation of difference.

Jill Blair
Strategy & Organizational Consulting for Nonprofits & Philanthropy

Menlo Park, CA