

From: Bella Yadegar
Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 10:20 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Concerns

To whomever it may concern,
I hope you are safe and well. My name is Bella Yadegar and I am a 10th grade student in Los Angeles. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

I am deeply connected to the issue of antisemitic and anti Israel attacks and we have seen an increase in this hate recently. It is crucial we work together to put an end to this ignorance and hate, starting with this generation of high school students. I wanted to share a story about my family that we should never let happen to another family or child. My grandparents were born and raised in Iran, and as a young child in the fifth grade, my grandmother was singled out because of her Jewish identity. People in her class did not want to sit next to her, and told her to stay away so her "dirty Jew disease" would not be spread to them. My grandmother told me how depressing and demoralizing it was to have this said at such a young age, and obviously the children who taunted here were being taught this hatred by someone. We now have a chance to make sure children are taught about love and inclusion, and by making the Ethnic Studies Model curriculum more inclusive, we can prevent stories like this from happening to our generation of students.

You have an opportunity to dramatically improve this curriculum. I urge you to please include a clear definition of antisemitism that reflects the hatred too many Jewish students are facing today and have faced over the centuries. Fighting this hatred means educating about antisemitism in all its forms, including the ones that anti-Israel extremists desperately want to sweep under the rug. Treating Arabs, Jews, Sikhs, Armenians, and other communities equally as you add lesson plans about them into this curriculum is crucial for this as well. This means rejecting pressure to favor or give special treatment to one community over all the rest. We need to approve all changes that will help prevent the curriculum from being used to promote hatred, bias, and one-sided political agendas in our schools. There is no reason anyone should be fighting against this, unless they are actively trying to exploit ethnic studies in order to promote some form of hatred or bias.

I hope you will take my thoughts into consideration and make necessary changes to keep Los Angeles safe from hate and bias, and include the Jewish community in future plans.

Thank you for your time,
Bella Y.