

From: Ariella Kelman
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 1:26 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC community engagement

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

Thank you for considering comments from community members and engaging the community of Californians in the ESMC development process. It's a privilege to be able to submit these comments.

I, Ariella Kelman, a resident of California for 43 years, a US Citizen, and an immigrant, appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am concerned by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this proposed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I am a parent of students of California public schools and a former student of California public schools. I take pride in the diversity that is California, and I am concerned that the new proposed curriculum excludes and misrepresents large groups of California's students and can fuel discrimination.

Here are my major concerns:

ESMC guiding values and principles need revision because they:

- o do not reflect California's shared values, nor the values laid out in AB 2016
- o establish an "us vs them" agenda
- o are partly based on the book *Education at War*, which encourages "solidarity" and "linkages" with BDS, and anti-Israel narratives, harmful to many Jewish students

The second draft does not prevent teaching offensive politically indoctrinating and anti-Israel elements from ESMC's first draft.

- o Please add Elements of Balanced Curriculum from the LA Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Curriculum to provide solid ground rules for course development
- o Numerous sections of the ESMC need revision to expose students to "multiple and often competing sources of information" and ensure that "diverse viewpoints are respected."

The few references to Jews are misleading and offensive.

- 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

References to Middle Eastern communities should not favor one community over others.

The ESMC should be revised to accurately and equitably represent the cultural and racial diversity of California so it is balanced, as required by SBE standards and ESMC Guidelines

- o If the ESMC includes ethnic groups from the Middle East, it should include Mizrahi Jews and other Middle Eastern communities proportionately. (See MENA [coalition letter of communities](#) which explains this in depth.)

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,
Ariella Kelman, San Mateo County