

From: Raz Bagg
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 10:43 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I, Raz Bagg, appreciate some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am greatly concerned and upset by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this proposed and flawed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Here are my major concerns (take examples from the email:

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

- do not reflect California's shared values, nor the values laid out in AB 2016
- advocate a narrow political philosophy
- establish an "us vs them" agenda
- 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.

- Add Elements of Balanced Curriculum from the LA Unified School District's Ethnic Studies Curriculum to provide solid ground rules for course development
- 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.

- Remove links to, and group advocacy of, virulently anti-Israel pro-BDS sites with malicious slander about imaginary genocide
- Include Mizrahi and other Jews of color
- Add a definition of antisemitism that addresses sinister stereotyping and double standards against Jews and Jewish institutions from all parts of the political spectrum.

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

- If Middle Eastern communities are considered Asian, then under the "broadly defined umbrella of Asian studies" are [Mizrahi Jews and other MENA ethnic groups](#), which represent ~60% of CA's MENA population (estimated 500,000 Californians).

Include a [lesson plan](#) covering contemporary issues of antisemitism, bigotry, and the Middle Eastern-American Jewish experience.

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

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 am a Californian parent. Adopting this model will affect my family personally. In addition to creating a hostile environment, this will promote hate speech and will result in safety issues for the Jewish community in California.

I strongly call for you to make significant revisions of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum 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,

Raz Bagg