

From: T. Miriam Green
Sent: Sunday, August 11, 2019 1:41 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Proposed Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Honored educators,

I am writing to provide my feedback on the proposed Ethnic Studies curriculum.

I was born and raised in California, and while I have lived in many places, I consider California my home. My parents and extended family live in Sonoma County, and I am planning to move to Los Angeles (from Seattle) in two months to make a permanent home there with my husband-to-be. I am Jewish by conversion, and I work as a rabbi. I received my rabbinic education in California (Ziegler School, American Jewish University, Los Angeles). When I move to Los Angeles in October, I will be working at an addiction rehab, Beit T'Shuvah, that serves a diverse community of Jews and non-Jews working to change their lives for the better.

I lived and studied in Jerusalem for a year, and because of my family's diverse background, I am deeply committed to pursuit of justice and peace in the Holy Land of Palestine/Israel. While I was there, I met and learned with Christian and Muslim Palestinians, and care for them and their future as I care for the future of my people, the Jewish people.

I am dismayed to read this proposed curriculum for my home state of California. It presents a harmful and destructive one-sided narrative, ignoring the problem of antisemitism that has persisted for thousands of years and in the last century led to the Holocaust, a gruesome genocide affecting Jews and non-Jews. I am very much in favor of teaching both sides of the Palestinian/Israeli narrative, acknowledging that all parties involved are human and holy, and that the situation we are faced with is deeply complicated. Your curriculum completely fails to do this in a way that is embarrassing to me as a Californian and shameful to me as a thoughtful and loving member of the human race.

Here is some specific feedback:

- A glossary for the curriculum includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It offers no critical perspectives (of which there are many) about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence as its primary motive - not to support a thriving Palestine as its primary motive.
- The sample lesson plans for the curriculum:
 - Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).
 - Promote a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico (p. 234).
 - Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).
 - Encourage teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no criticism of Palestinian leaders (p. 256, 264-269).

•The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that, "The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to... enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism." Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.

It is my sincere hope that you hear my feedback - along with the feedback of the many others writing in who are more educated and articulate than I - and adjust your curriculum accordingly. I am only in support of teaching about human diversity and raising our children to see the equal holiness in every person and culture. That is precisely why it is urgent and necessary to make sure your curriculum as proposed never meets student minds in a classroom setting.

Very sincerely,
Rabbi T. Miriam Green