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The Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust



July 23, 2019

Ms. Soomin Chao
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Ms. Chao:

On behalf of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC), we appreciate the work of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (MCAC) in producing a multi-chapter CA 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) draft. We greatly value the opportunity to comment on this draft. The enclosed review provides recommendations aimed at ensuring accuracy, inclusion, and pedagogical rigor for California's students. Given that AB-331 would make a one-semester high school Ethnic Studies course a requirement for graduation in California, we believe it is all the more important to ensure that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is of the highest quality and adheres to California values, standards, and law.

JPAC is the largest single-state coalition of Jewish organizations in the nation. We advocate in Sacramento on behalf of our members, which are comprised of Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Relations Councils, Jewish Family Service agencies, and many Jewish community organizations.

We appreciate the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Guidelines, which set high standards of quality, accuracy, and inclusion for the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. However, the content and pedagogy of the current draft of the ESMC does not adhere to the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Guidelines that require the curriculum to:

- "Be written in language that is inclusive and supportive of multiple users"
- "Encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as consciousness raising and knowledge building, identity development and self-determination, justice and social change, and love, respect"
- "Be inclusive by creating space for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or citizenship to learn different perspectives"

We observed firsthand the exuberance of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, whose meetings began with a unity chant. Unfortunately, that spirit did not translate into the draft, where we found content that is disunifying, exclusionary, and, at times, even delegitimizing. We ask that the IQC address these matters before sending the draft to the Board of Education for approval.

The latest California History-Social Science Framework directs that instructional content maintain academic rigor, historical accuracy, and consistency. The body of knowledge presented in classrooms should not be prejudicial, and must be balanced, so that our students can develop the reasoning, problem-solving, communication, and analytical thinking skills necessary for the future. The model curriculum must adhere to California Education Code sections 60044 and 51500, which explicitly prohibit instructional materials and instruction that reflect or promote discriminatory bias on “the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation, occupation.” At present, due to errors of omission and commission, the current ESMC draft threatens both sections of the Education Code for Jewish American students.

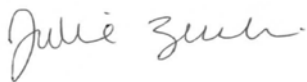
JPAC is writing on behalf of the following organizations: the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties; the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties; the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles; the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley; the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region; Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region; Jewish Long Beach (formerly the Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Foundation of Long Beach and West Orange County); the Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys; and the Jewish Federation of Ventura County.

Our organizations are grateful to you, the members of the Instructional Quality Commission, for your consideration of the recommended changes detailed in the enclosed review. Thank you for your commitment to accurate and representative education for all California students. We appreciate your timely attention to this matter. We look forward to participating in the process and appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,



Lynn Bunim
Chair
Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC)



Julie Zeisler
Executive Director
Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC)



Abigail M. Porth

Executive Director, Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties



Danny Grossman

CEO, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties



Jay Sanderson

President, The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles



Diane Fisher

Director, Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley



William Recht

Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region



Bruce Pomer

Chair, Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region



Jason Moss

Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys



Zachary M. Benjamin

Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Long Beach (formerly the Jewish federation and Jewish Community of Long Beach and West Orange County)



Cheri DeKofsky

Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Ventura County

Cc:

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The Honorable Jose Medina, Assembly member

The Honorable Ben Allen, State Senator, IQC member

The Honorable Jessie Gabriel, Assembly member

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Assembly member

Jamie Callahan, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor

Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director of the California State Board of Education

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President of the California State Board of Education

Dr. Stephanie Gregson, Director, Instructional Quality Commission, and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Performance, Planning & Technology Branch

Sarah Neville-Morgan, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Teaching & Learning Support Branch

Dr. Kenneth McDonald, Lead Consultant for the 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum