

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL and E-Mail to [ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov);  
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Ms. Soomin Chao  
Chair, Instructional Quality Commission  
California Department of Education

Dear Chairwoman Chao and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission:

I grew up in Los Angeles, I went to public schools (even through college at CSUN), and believe I received a good education. I am now 57 years old, but do not recall that my education was particularly politicized or biased against a minority group. Admittedly, I don't think there was anything about Jews or Israel in my elementary or high school curriculum. At least nothing memorable. Unfortunately, the new proposed curriculum seems to ensure that students are left with an inaccurate and negative view of Israel - and Jews in general.

This is very surprising and certainly does not further the stated goal of the curriculum to teach respect and tolerance toward all ethnic groups. Even worse, it demonstrates a lack of awareness – and even a blindness – with respect to the blatant agenda of the BDS Movement and its supporters, as well as the tangible groundswell of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel acts and violence in California and our country as a whole. Notably, the tone and content of the proposed curriculum certainly runs counter to the legislation recently overwhelmingly passed by the U.S. House of Representatives which opposed BDS in a 398-17 vote (is this fact going to be part of your curriculum?). It is also counter to the repudiation of the stated goals of BDS by the State of California in 2016.

The problems and situation facing both Israelis and Palestinians is certainly vexing and complex. However, it is shocking that the curriculum adopts the narrative of

BDS, and even a terrorist group like Hamas, by stating that some Palestinians live under “apartheid” conditions. (See Glossary under definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel). The proposal parrots BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this movement’s campaign of hate, whose real goal is to end Israel’s existence. And even if the drafters “won’t go that far” with respect to condemnation of BDS (as did the U.S. House), the curriculum should include the substantial historical record of the international communities’ efforts to grant a sovereign state to the Jewish people, which was totally rejected by the Arab countries who went to war against Israel in 1948 to “drive the Jews into the sea” (a common refrain by some even now). (Chapter 2, pg. 242) The curriculum should also mention the at least 400,000 Jews who were forced out of their homes in the majority Muslim countries which Jews had resided for hundreds – even thousands of years – when Israel declared its independence. (Chapter 2, pg. 242)

The curriculum can further discuss (in any discussion of the Jews in California or America) the tremendous record of Jewish contributors to humanity, including science, philanthropy, and civil rights – despite the ravages of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism that continues to plague our society.

In other words, if the drafters believe that BDS or any Palestinian or anti-Israel movements needs ANY discussion at all, it should also have the undeniable historical record of the reasons and support for the founding of the state of Israel, her defensive wars, her success at achieving peace with Egypt and Jordan, her return of over 85% of the land that Israel had conquered in her defense of this little strip of precious land, her contributions to science and technology, her assistance to the world over with intelligence regarding terrorist and anti-Western violence and ideologies, her exported expertise in water purification, irrigation and desalination, her dispatching of rescue teams to other countries in time of need, her medical care to even those who declare her an enemy, her equal rights for her citizens, whether they be Jew, Christian, Muslim, Druze, her protection of access to all holy sites for all religions (and even cooperating with respect to limit Jews to visit their holiest site – the Temple Mount – talk about apartheid....), her respect for LGBTQ individuals, her equal rights for all color and creed.

Personally, I don't think a "free Palestine" under the PA or Hamas (as urged by BDS) would come close to providing the freedoms that the state of Israel grants its citizens – as well as non-citizens from Palestinian territories, Jordan, and other neighbors who daily work and make a living in Israel.

I hope that the drafters go back to its proposed curriculum, and make their best effort to ensure that children who attend our public schools are not give just one side of the story, and most certainly not an inaccurate and negative view of Jews or the State of Israel.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Schiff", is written below the text "Very Truly Yours,".