

From: Larry Hendel

Sent: Wednesday, November 11, 2020 12:24 PM

To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>

Cc: lindadh@suse.stanford.edu; Superintendent <Superintendent@cde.ca.gov>;
info@araborganizing.org

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Arab American studies in Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

My name is Larry Hendel. I am a member of the East Bay chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace.

I am a strong supporter of Ethnic Studies, but I believe you are making serious errors in your handling of the important topic of Arab-American studies.

1. Placing Arab-American studies in an "appendix" does a disservice to the rigor of the Ethnic Studies discipline and is an insult to Arab-Americans. Arab-American studies should come under Asian-American studies, consistent with the decades-long practice of Ethnic Studies at the University level. Superintendent Thurmond promised this at the August IQC meeting, and he has now gone back on that promise.

2. In the most recent iteration of the model curriculum, the following definition of antisemitism was included in the Preface, page 4, lines 66-69: "Antisemitism is hatred, discrimination, fear, and prejudice against Jews based on stereotypes and myths that target their ethnicity, culture, religion, traditions, right to self-determination, or **connection to the State of Israel.**" (Emphasis added). This is a terrible definition. There should be no conflation of antisemitism with criticism of Israel. Adding Israel to the definition of antisemitism is a callous maneuver to weaponize the definition in order to silence potential critics of Israel. It is a political move, pure and simple, and the CDE should be ashamed for knuckling under. I don't understand why there has to be a definition of antisemitism in the document, but if the CDE insists, I propose the following: "Antisemitism is discrimination against, violence towards, or stereotypes of Jews for being Jewish."

Sincerely,

Larry Hendel