

**From:** Michelle Taylor

**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2020 5:28 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Cc:** [email redacted]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] antisemitism in your Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC)

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

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

Here are my major concerns:

- Lack of non-Muslim middle eastern immigrants (e.g. Mizrahi Jews, Iranians, Kurds, Assyrian-Christians, Coptic-Christians, Yezidis, Baha'is, and Zoroastrians)
- Treating Jews as all the same when we are very diverse, come from all over the globe, and come in many colors. **Appendix A, Page 6, Line 8166-67:** "Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege." This will be very interesting for my LatinX, Asian, and Black Jewish students to write about.
- Since when do public schools teach students that another country does not have the right to exist. **Chapter 1, Page 9, Lines 179-194:** footnote #20 references a chapter called *Pedagogies of Resistance*, from the book [\*Education at War\*](#), which explains that educators should "develop solidarity and create linkages," with other movements, referring directly to works (*Maira and Shihade 2006 & Spade 2011*) which promote anti-Zionism, BDS and one-sided anti-Israel narratives. Why is any curriculum being based on a book with "War" in the title?

I am a Jewish educator in San Jose, California. If this area of the curriculum is too difficult for you I would be happy to lend you a hand. As far as I am concerned, this curriculum is detrimental to my students. We teach them to be proud of the diversity of the Jewish people here and in Israel. We don't sugar coat Israel's issues, but it has been the Jewish homeland for thousands of years, and in 1947 the United Nations voted to allow this tiny Jewish state to be established in a land surrounded by much larger Muslim countries. Your curriculum needs to reflect this fact, and the fact that there has been a Jewish presence in the land ever since there was a region called Judea

(where the name Jewish/Jew comes from). It needs to reflect the diversity of the Jewish people and the diversity of the people who come from the Middle East. Not everyone is Muslim, and if you insist on talking only about the problems between Israel and the Palestinians, then you must also talk about the genocides, and forced emigrations of non-Muslims out of the Muslim countries in the Middle East. Teach the facts, not an agenda. Don't give ammunition to the antisemites that my students already deal with in their secular/public schools.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC 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,

לשלום ובריאות, (peace and health)  
Michelle

Michelle Jenkins  
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Congregation Sinai