

From: Nina Block

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 9:53 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

This proposed curriculum needs to be rethought and changed. Wasn't it supposed to empower all students to learn about each other and what they share in common as Americans? Instead it seems designed to divide students into victims and oppressors based on their family backgrounds. It is more about imposing predigested political views and questionable interpretations of history than encouraging students to think critically and constructively. Just 2 parts that I thought were especially bad: "Students will write a paper detailing certain events in American history that have led to Jewish and Irish Americans gaining racial privilege. They will be asked to think critically about why and who is allowing this evolution in white identity and how this shift is affecting the identity of Irish and Jewish Americans." What about the recent synagogue shootings, bomb threats and other anti-Semitic incidents that have been increasing over the last few years? What about black and Asian Jews? Then there is the requirement to document family trees and migration stories? That is a huge violation of privacy, and students who are undocumented, have relatives who are undocumented, or live with people who are undocumented could be put at risk by completing that assignment. Then there are refugees and children of refugees whose migration experiences and reasons for migrating are really traumatic, and who do not want to share them with their classes, and who are afraid to ask their parents.

These are just two examples out of many. You need to revise the guiding principles to remove political agendas, add elements of balance, provide students with opportunities for doing their own research and acquiring critical thinking abilities and depth of understanding. They need to form their own conclusions about social justice and social responsibility. Also, since they are teenagers it is not sensible to glorify a militant approach to changing race relations while promoting a curriculum that sets people of different races against each other. What are you trying to achieve by this? Why not promote empathy and understanding instead of polarization?

Sent from my iPhone