

**The California Department of Education received more than 500 submissions that contained the text below. Other identical comments may have been posted separately.**

**From:** Paul Candau

**Sent:** Thursday, September 10, 2020 9:37 AM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ACTION ALERT: Take Action for Inclusive Ethnic Studies Education

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission ,

I write to express my serious concerns about the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum revision and urge improvements to include the following:

- REMOVE THE CURRENT GUIDING VALUES AND ADD SAFEGUARDS AGAINST PROMOTING ONE-SIDED NARROW POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS IN THE CLASSROOM. Ensure that instructional materials present fair and balanced academic presentations of various points of view, rather than partisan political ideology.

Include the Balanced Curriculum Guidelines from the Los Angeles School District's Ethnic Studies programs. Remove the current "Guiding Values" which promote radical ideological aims such as "transformative post-imperial resistance," and can be used to bring hate and bias into our classrooms. Instead, align lessons to the "Eight Outcomes" for Ethnic Studies which promote values such as mutual respect, understanding of others and self-empowerment for civic engagement.

- INCLUDE THE HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE OF ETHNIC GROUPS - SUCH AS JEWS, HINDUS, KOREANS AND ARMENIANS - WHO HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE CURRICULUM, CONSISTENT WITH A COMPREHENSIVE ETHNIC STUDIES APPROACH.

The California Department of Education has proposed the more narrow "critical ethnic studies" focus on four core groups of people of color: African-American; Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x; Native Americans; and Asian-Americans. Yet the Asian-American section is broadly construed to include lesson plans about a diverse range of groups, including Arab Americans. Given this paradigm, the curriculum should also include the experiences of the Middle Eastern Jewish communities, as well as other Middle Eastern minorities, by adding the JIMENA lesson plan to the Asian American section in Appendix B.

- TEACH STUDENTS TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM AND OTHER FORMS OF BIGOTRY. Ensure that students learn to combat bias, bigotry and racism by including a meaningful lesson plan about antisemitism, utilizing the most commonly accepted definition, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition, which has been internationally adopted and endorsed

by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Department of Education.

Antisemitism is rising across the country, and in California, Jews are the #1 target of religious based hate crimes and the #3 target of all ethnic based hate crimes. Jews are an ethnic group that has historically faced intense discrimination and genocide. This ethnic studies curriculum – designed to combat discrimination and racism – must also include lesson materials about antisemitism.

- RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW AND ADHERE TO PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY. Instead of 11th hour tricks, implement a fair procedural review and release all aspects of the curriculum now.

We urge you to correct these deficiencies. The current version lacks cultural competency, advances a narrow political ideology, and does a great disservice to California's diverse population.

Don't be fooled. Insisting on a balanced and inclusive approach to ethnic studies does not dilute or delay this important curriculum. It strengthens and improves the ESMC to better address the issues of racial injustice and strengthen our democracy. A flawed version will do the opposite.

K-12 students across California deserve an opportunity to honestly confront racism in all its forms, build bridges of interethnic understanding, and see themselves in the curriculum. Please help get the final version right.

Sincerely,  
Paul Candau