

From: Holly Istas
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2020 12:45 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum Revision

Good afternoon,

I am a Social Studies/History teacher in Davis, CA and am alarmed at the latest revision of the CA Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. Pro-Israel interest groups should not define antisemitism. Definitions that name criticism of Israel as antisemitic are opposed by many Jewish organizations, both within the United States and internationally. These definitions violate our constitutional right to free speech because their application censors virtually all criticism of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian human rights and equality. These definitions also downplay the main source of antisemitism in the United States, which is white nationalism. Please substitute: antisemitism is discrimination against, violence towards, or stereotypes of Jews for being Jewish.

We know, from the demands for racial justice sweeping this county, that it is offensive and dangerous to shunt the histories and perspectives of people of color to the sidelines. These revisions are tone-deaf to the political moment we are living in. Our children are once again being left to fend for themselves in an increasingly racialized and polarized political climate. California should be a sanctuary, not a place of danger for our students and their families. Young people in particular face the consequences of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Arab and Muslim youth are simultaneously invisibilized and targeted. For too long, Arab youth have learned little about their history besides offensive and racist images and stereotypes. Arab-American studies curriculum provides a critical intervention to these stereotypes in K-12 education.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Holly Istas
Social Studies Teacher
she/her/hers
GSA Advisor
NHS Advisor
ISU Advisor
Davis Senior High School

This email message is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain privileged and confidential information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message. The unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or distribution of this email may constitute a violation of federal and/or state laws.