

**From:** Liz Michelena

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2020 8:16 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Antisemitism in CA curriculum

Hi,

The ADL wants me to tell you how much I appreciate the two lesson plans on Jewish Americans, numbers 40 & 41. They want me to ask you to retain those on Antisemitism, Jewish Middle Eastern americans, and Jewish Americans in terms of identity, intersectionality and how they are part of a complicated idea of race vs belief. They want me to ask you to add the ADL's lesson Building Insights to Navigate Antisemitism and Hate.

I'm sure that they have great ideas, and I truly do support them.

Really, I want you to know what it's been like for my kids to grow up being Jewish in a far less diverse area of California than anyplace I've ever lived before. Their elementary school had art projects, songs, and activities planned around Christmas and Easter. They learn about Separation of Church and State, but experienced secularized religion in school. I took the time, every year to go into whichever of their classrooms where their teachers welcomed me, to teach what I could about our holidays, traditions, and customs.

My daughter's 6th grade teacher was Chinese, so given the choice between teaching the unit on Ancient China or the more standard Judaism unit, she chose China. Her right to do so. Later, there was an activity, where the kids engaged in the concept of managing a walled city. There was a financial penalty for helping the Hebrew Nomads, within the game. The nomads didn't have to be named Hebrew, they could have been generic nomads. When I pointed out the subtle Antisemitism in the lesson plan, the teacher ALLOWED my daughter to write and present the History of the Jewish People. It was probalby 10 pages to get from Abraham to Moses, but that's where I drew the line. First, she had the negative experience of her classmates connecting the dots between the assignment, and barring her and her one Jewish classmate out of the city, and then, for speaking up, she had to do extra work.

My kids (and I) have always had to be The Jew In The Room, to answer every question, because kids are not getting an adequate education. In 7th grade, when this cohort of kids didn't get the same curriculum as their Jr High classmates, it was up to her to educate them on what they missed. The responsibility did not fall to the 7th grade History teacher, or to the parents of the other kids, it fell to the Jewish kid in the room.

Later, when reading Anne Frank, at every dark part of the story, all eyes turned toward her. They also turn to her for pronunciation of unfamiliar words.

This all came to a head at the beginning of this month when a classmate of my daughter's, a high school junior, posted this image:



I'm sure that it jumps right off the page that the "Jude" in the star has been replaced with "friedlich". No? It certainly comes across (whether by intent or not) that this propaganda blames the pandemic on Jews. Jewish people have been blamed for prior pandemics, because they didn't get sick at the same rate as other people...because of the hand washing rituals.

The student who posted this on his personal Instagram account, refused to take it down, could not see that the mere use of Nazi Propaganda is by itself Antisemitic. He thought he was being creative and clever, and still can not bring himself to apologize or admit that he caused harm. His ignorance paired with his arrogance are caustic. He's too smart to have made such a blunder, and his ego can't take it.

Antisemitism should be taught along with Anti Racism, and anti bias in all its forms, including White Fragility.

In closing, I have attached the video that my daughter and her friend made to address the Antisemitic

Instagram post, to educate their classmates, teachers, administration, and community. They should not have to be the ones teaching this. California can do better to support the diversity of it's students.

[https://youtu.be/RzldKG\\_h1Z8](https://youtu.be/RzldKG_h1Z8)