

**From:** Yana Kriseman

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 6:56 PM

**To:** Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Highly Concerning Content in the Ethnic Studies Curriculum Draft

Dear California Department of Education Staff,

I am a California resident and a parent of a San Mateo Foster City School district student. I am writing because I am very concerned and dismayed by the content of the ethnic studies curriculum, specifically an assignment asking students to discuss "Jewish privilege". This assignment is dangerous and irresponsible. Claiming that Jews are privileged while at the same time failing to discuss and acknowledge the long history of discrimination and persecution of Jews in the US, is at best negligent and at worst intentional anti-Semitic propaganda. This same false rhetoric of Jewish privilege and power was used by the Nazis to vilify and murder Jews during the Holocaust. This same false rhetoric was on display when white supremacists marched in Charlottesville holding signs that said "Jews will not replace us." This same rhetoric was on display this weekend in LA when a banner was hung off a freeway overpass saying that Jews want a race war.

This curriculum legitimizes anti-Semitism which not only directly contradicts the supposed intention of the curriculum to promote racial and social justice, but also puts our entire community at risk. In our city, the Jewish Community Center serves as one of the main preschools, afterschool programs, and exercise facilities. It serves people of all races and religions. When you design a curriculum that pours fuel on increasingly violent antisemitism, you are putting all of us in danger.

This, unfortunately, is not the only instance in this curriculum that vilifies and undermines the Jewish experience in the US. I strongly implore you to re-examine your curriculum and really think about whether it is promoting racial justice or directing hatred at other ethnic groups. Please involve members of the Jewish community to allow us to have a voice in the curriculum as you discuss our lives in this country and this State.

I would also like to remind you what the last several years of "Jewish privilege" have looked like - two mass shootings at synagogues, one mass shooting at a Jewish grocery store, a mass stabbing attack at a Hanukkah celebration, numerous violent assaults against Jews just waking in their neighborhood, swastikas painted over buildings in Jewish neighborhoods. The number of anti-Semitic hate crimes (perpetuated by members of both political sides) is rapidly increasing every year. There were over 2100 instance of anti-Semitic hate crimes last year and California is one of the top 5 states in which these hate crimes have occurred. The rate of hate crimes against Jews has increased more than those against any other group.

Please be the solution to antisemitism and not the cause.

Sincerely,  
Yana Kriseman