

From: Ross Glinkenhouse

Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 6:59 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: BBYO's Public Statement Regarding Revision of Ethnic Studies Curriculum

This email is being sent on behalf of Ben Cohen and Caroline Kramer, Regional Presidents of BBYO Central Region West (San Francisco Bay Area).

Instructional Quality Commission

c/o California Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks & Instructional Resources Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3207 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public Statement to Revise Issues with Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission, California Department of Education, and State Board of Education,

In response to your joint statement today on the draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum:

Our names are Ben Cohen and Caroline Kramer. We're the elected presidents of AZA & BBG, the high school fraternity and sorority portion of BBYO in the Bay Area. BBYO is a teen-led international fraternity and sorority for Jewish teens from all around the world. We have almost 100 years of history with the founding of BBG in San Francisco and a global membership of over 30,000. Today, I write to you on behalf of all those teens who are currently advocating for the Jewish people and on behalf of every alumni, parent, and staff member that continues to support our cause. Since 1924, AZA & BBG have cemented themselves as major stakeholders in the Jewish future and as a group that advocates not only for Jewish rights, but for equality around the world.

Thus, we commend the California Department of Education for instituting ethnic studies into curriculum and putting a focus on improving school climate statewide and making every student feel accepted. We further commend the California Department of Education for recognizing the faults in the original curriculum, faults that were inherently anti-Semitic, and working hard to create a new curriculum that represents the entire state of California.

When re-writing the curriculum, we urge you to not only focus on removing BDS and other problematic sections, but to focus on educating about the many struggles the Jewish people have gone through. The curriculum, as it stood, did a fantastic job of teaching about the hardships that so many ethnicities have gone through. We see it as a critical and major improvement to include chapters that educate about the struggles the Jewish people have gone through over time.

Many students in BBYO have expressed their lack of comfort in public schools due to their Jewish religion, heritage, and ethnicity. Similarly, the whole world is seeing anti-Semitism rise at striking rates as seen this past year with the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh and the Chabad shooting in Poway. The curriculum in question promotes BDS, an organization that has proved time and time again to be a significant contributor to this anti-Semitism, amongst other forms of it, worldwide.

We hope you take this into consideration when determining the new curriculum.

Thank you,

Ben Cohen - Regional President
Simon Wiesenthal AZA #2524
Palo Alto

Caroline Kramer - Regional President
Josephine Esther Mentzer BBG #2540
Los Altos and Mountain View
Representing the following local presidents:

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House of David AZA #1488
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Ester Alper - Chapter President
Atz' Chaim BBG #2043
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Yali Goldstein - Chapter President
Ramon AZA #195
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Mira Shlimenzon - Chapter President
Jerusalem Shel Zahav BBG #1516
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Michael Rimboim - Chapter President
Morris Adler AZA #1855
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Leah Beller - Chapter President
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Tamir Menahemy - Chapter President
Dreidel AZA #2525
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Adiella Kessler - Chapter President
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Daniel Polonsky - Chapter President
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In Community,

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