

From: Paul Seave

Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 4:18 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum - Public Comment

To whom it may concern: I am a former Chief Counsel to the State Board of Education and a Jewish-American. I am extremely upset that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum appears to perpetuate anti-semitic tropes and even manufactures new variants on the old. I understand that there is widespread disagreement with Israeli policy toward the Palestinians; I fear this disagreement, however, may have resulted in a Model Curriculum that includes information that is false, misleading, and damaging when it comes to the Curriculum's descriptions of Jews. For example, referring to some Jews as having or using "privilege" unfortunately taps into the well-worn anti-semitic argument that Jews have used their privilege to oppress Christians and other groups -- we know the genocidal outcome of this and related arguments.

It is vital to assess whether a new curriculum, especially one dedicated to correcting past stereotypes, wanders off course to perpetuate old stereotypes. Prudence requires that the authors of such an effort deploy conscientious efforts to avoid undoing with one hand what they strive to achieve with the other. A fairminded reading of the Model Curriculum leads to only one conclusion - Jews are still regarded as the "other." I hope the Model Curriculum can be refined to excise the passages and concepts that falsely describe Jews and their role in our state and country. Thank you.

Paul Seave