

From: Carol Oberg

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 12:24 AM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] comments on revised curriculum

August 14, 2020

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

I, Carol Oberg, appreciate some of the improvements in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am still very concerned and upset by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remain in this proposed and flawed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Here are my major concerns :

- The ESMC guiding principles as expressed in revision 2 do not reflect California's shared values as laid out in AB 2016. There is too much of "us" vs. "them". We need to connect our varied peoples, not divide them. This agenda is partially based on the book Education at War which encourages "solidarity" and "linkages" with BDS, and anti-Israel narratives that are not only harmful to Jewish students , but are based on a political agenda that falsely accuses Israel of many wrongdoings, and supports the age old conspiracy theory against Jewish people. There is no place in this curriculum, or any curriculum for such a blatant cantor against a minority.
- In connection to the above statement, there is nothing in this second draft that would prevent teaching offensive political indoctrination that is both anti-Israel and anti-semitic. Including and respecting diverse viewpoints should be part of this curriculum for. A search in Elements of Balanced Curriculum for LAUSD Ethnic Studies Curriculum could provide better ground rules for course development.
- There is prejudicial and misleading information about Jewish people, and their contribution to this state. First of all, all links to the BDS sites must be removed, unless they are used to demonstrate propaganda and how social media can easily provide harmful rhetoric including stereotyping and bigotry, encourage prejudice and harmful behaviors. A definition of antisemitism as created through the ADL should be included, as well as specific lessons on antisemitism (and its history in California) and racism. In addition, Jews of color should be included within this curriculum.
- There should be no favoritism regarding discussion and lessons on the Middle East .If Middle Eastern communities are considered Asian, then under the "broadly defined umbrella of Asian studies" are [Mizrahi Jews and other MENA groups seeking inclusion](#), which represent ~60% of CA's MENA population (estimated 500,000 Californians).
- Include a lesson plan covering contemporary issues of antisemitism, anti-Zionism, bigotry, and the Middle Eastern-American Jewish experience.

I am a retired Californian University professor of Education, and understand the implications of giving teachers a flawed and biased curriculum to guide their teaching. For far too long we have

not provided a complete, thorough and honest look at the history of our state (and country) and it is time that we do this. Therefore, we must get this right and eliminate bias and prejudice that is implicit and explicit within this curriculum draft. Please pay attention to those voices that are requesting revising this curriculum. It is a guide for the current and future generations as they assume ethical and moral responsibility to themselves, this state, and this country.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

Thank you,
Carol Oberg, Ph.D.

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