

From: T Bel
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 2:57 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [emails redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment revised ESMC, Agenda Item No. 2

August 10, 2020

To the Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education:

I note some improvement in the second draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC2); however, I remain upset by the gratuitous imposition of a one-sided political ideology that still remains. Thus this second ESMC2 draft must be regarded as flawed, reflecting these major concerns:

- Advocacy of a narrow political philosophy that promotes a stance of “us” versus “them”. This stance has affected the preparation of all the lesson plans.
- Many sections of ESMC2 need thorough revision to allow students to be exposed to multiple and varying sources of information, and to make sure that “diverse viewpoints are respected.”
- References to Jews are misleading, and often offensive. ESMC2 must remove all links to nastily anti-Israel and pro-BDS websites, including those sites featuring malicious libel about imaginary genocides.
- ADD a clear and widely-accepted definition of anti-Semitism to allow students to pick up on current manifestations of anti-Semitic belief, stereotyping, and double standards against Jews and Jewish movements and institutions from all parts of the American political spectrum.
- Add specific lesson materials that clearly address anti-Semitism and clearly label it as a virulent form of bigotry.
- Include Middle Eastern (Mizrahi) and other Jews of color. Make clear that most Jews in Israel are not descended from white or European backgrounds.

I am a lifetime Californian interested in having our varied State be better understood and appreciated by its citizens, but who is most concerned by how the ability of my family to live in California would be degraded by ESMC2 unless major revisions are prepared and again reviewed by the public.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these major concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, both to align with the ESMC Guidelines and to ensure student critical thinking. Then the lessons and topics can be revised accordingly to match these enhanced principles.

Very truly yours,

T. J. Belick

Private Individual