

From: David Kahn
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 6:16 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Dear Sir/Madame,

I have reservations about the proposed model for Ethnic Studies across the State of California.

Immigrants names have been changed, often because those who checked them in at Ellis Island and other ports of entry could not pronounce their given names. And of those of who did change their names by choice? It was an attempt at assimilation, which is what living in American's melting pot is all about. It was also about avoiding the widespread, blatant prejudice which existed at that time.

Signalling out Jews as 'privileged' is very telling about the creators of this model. Jews are not attempting to "pass as white" in order to slip into a privileged group. That has sinister connotations which are not warranted. It implies that they are outsiders who are worming their way in. While this may not be the intention of those who prepared the curriculum, some may pick up that implication. In the current period of racial and ethnic suspicion, and the evident lack of sophisticated analysis among many people, I think framing the curriculum this way is a bad idea. It has echoes of an older, European characterization of Jews, which is not a good model to follow. This is not the tone which should be set in an ethnic studies curriculum. This group should be given the consideration afforded to any other ethnic group. If not, why not? It is all too easy to slip into an attitude toward Jews which existed for many years, and which still exists. I hope that this aspect of the curriculum can be reconsidered.

- David Kahn