

From: Dr. Debra Ruben
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 1:34 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Ethnic studies model curriculum

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

I am writing about the proposed new Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but I also urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of it, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others. Jews comprise 0.2% of the world's population and have been the target of racism, scapegoating, and genocide, representing a minority that should be addressed as such in the curriculum. As an educator, parent, and citizen, I am confounded at this proposed curriculum, and believe it requires deep reconsideration and revision.

ESMC focuses heavily on power structures and forms of oppression including white supremacy, sexism, classism, Islamophobia, and transphobia — but excludes anti-Semitism. Anti-Jewish bias receives only a passing mention during a discussion of intersectionality in a proposed course on "Pacific Islander studies". A 22-page glossary and bibliography has entries for Islamophobia and racism, but none for anti-Semitism. The curriculum should have a proportionate section devoted to the biases, roots, and realities of historical and modern-day anti-Semitism. Considering the current resurgence and soaring levels of anti-Semitism here and abroad, it's hard to understand why this would not be a focus of the curriculum.

The state of Israel also receives sharp criticism in the draft curriculum, with little context about the history of the Jewish state. The 1948 Arab-Israeli war, known in Israel as the War of Independence, is referred to as the "1948 Palestine War," and the creation of Israel is referred to as the "Nakba," which is Arabic for "catastrophe."

Please consider and engage in a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns. Otherwise, you will be marginalizing and oppressing a minority with its very creation and existence.

Thank you,
Debra

Dr. Debra Ruben, Ph.D., LCSW