

From: Sharon Binger
Sent: Saturday, August 10, 2019 8:47 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Tony; JIAC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,
I am extremely concerned and disturbed by the inherently unbalanced Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. I support the idea of teaching an ethnic studies class, but urge you to make major revisions or a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, consistent with the recommendations from the California Legislative Jewish Caucus letter, Stand With Us, Jimena, Amcha and others.

I am committed to teaching my twin seven year olds to be open to all people and ethnicities. This is critical messaging in our home on a daily basis, especially given the intolerance that is part of the ethos in our country today. I cannot in good conscience have them participate in a curriculum that purports to teach them that message while demonizing the core of who they are as Jewish children. Despite the significant contributions of Jews to California and America's history, politics, culture, and government – and our community's longstanding struggle against hatred and discrimination – the ESMC erases the Jewish experience in America. The exclusion is offensive and inconsistent with the purpose of ethnic studies to promote inclusion and tolerance. If you purport to want to change that value system in a meaningful way you cannot do that by demonizing an entire people. You will not only be perpetuating the very principles that you are seeking to condemn, but you will be teaching our children the definition of hypocrisy and fueling the growing trend of antisemitism in America and especially on college campuses.

The ESMC omits any mention of antisemitism though there are three times as many hate crimes in America against Jews as against Muslims. The most recent FBI statistics record 938 antisemitic incidents and 273 Islamophobic incidents. Hate crimes against Jews rose by 37% according to 2018 FBI statistics, accounting for over half of religious-based hate crimes in the United States. Though a great deal of curriculum is devoted to Islamophobia, there is absolutely none devoted to anti-Semitism.

I think it is critical that you take a step back and evaluate the curriculum as a whole, the purpose you are trying to accomplish, and how you are risking undermining the core messaging at the expense of an entire people who have a significant role and presence in this state. In order to protect the integrity of your project I strongly believe that you need to make major revisions or do a significant rewrite of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Thank you,
Sharon Binger