

From: Joanne Donsky
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 8:25 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: Assemblyman Marc Berman
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns about Draft 2 of the ESMC

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,
I am pleased to see that there have been some improvements to the first draft of Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), I am very concerned with the offensive, one-sided political dogma that remains in the second draft.

My major concerns are as follows:

- The second draft of the ESMC frequently does not adhere to the shared positive values laid out in AB 2016. The Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC must be revised to use more precise, inclusive, and non-political terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, and to build bridges of intergroup understanding.
-
- Then, the lessons and sample topics must be revised to match the revised principles.
-
- The section on Arab-Americans was removed from the original version of the ESMC. I believe that was appropriate. However, I understand that there is a push to put it back in under the heading of Asian studies. If it is reinstated, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a highly charged political subject, should not be part of the discussion. It is not only irrelevant to California students but also, in the first draft of the ESMC, was rife with antisemitism and anti-Israel material.
-
- If the Arab-American section is once again put in the curriculum, the curriculum must be balanced. Palestinian-Americans, featured in the Arab American Studies section of the 1st draft of ESMC, comprise only 3% of California's Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) population. If they are included, the Jews and Iranians of MENA, who comprise almost 60% of the MENA population in California, must be included, too.

As the mother of a child who went through public schools in San Mateo County and whose grandchildren are likely to also, I urge you to make significant revisions of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum to address these concerns.

Sincerely,
Joanne Donsky
Portola Valley, CA