

**From:** Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 7:00 AM

**To:** SBE; [emails redacted]u

**Cc:** Superintendent; Stephanie Gregson; Karen Stapf Walters; senator.leyva@senate.ca.gov; Assemblymember.ODonnell@assembly.ca.gov; senator.allen@senate.ca.gov; assemblymember.weber@assembly.ca.gov; governor@governor.ca.gov; gavin.newsom@gov.ca.gov; ann.oleary@gov.ca.gov

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 88 organizations urge response to deceptive ethnic studies school board campaign

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond  
State Board President  
California State Board of Education  
1430 N Street, Room 5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dr. Darling-Hammond,

We are a coalition of 88 organizations with hundreds of thousands of members and supporters, many of them residents of California. We are keenly aware of the enormous challenges currently facing the state's educational system, and we are deeply grateful for all that the State Board of Education is doing to ensure the continuity and quality of education for California's K-12 students.

Most of our organizations wrote to the California Department of Education (CDE) last summer to express our serious concerns about the politically-charged nature of the AB 2016-mandated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which sought to indoctrinate students into a highly controversial and divisive set of ideological beliefs that we feared would exacerbate ethnic divisions and foment bigotry in California schools. Especially now, as our country and state grapple with ways to come together to address unacceptable inequality and injustice and unite against hate and bigotry, it is more important than ever that our state's first high school ethnic studies curriculum provides an opportunity to help students understand the difficult challenges facing our communities and promotes mutual respect, civility and unity.

Sadly, the initial draft curriculum failed on all of those fronts, and we greatly appreciate that you publicly acknowledged the draft's inadequacies last summer. In response to the outpouring of criticism about the initial draft from more than 19,000 California citizens and organizations, state legislators and the Governor, you immediately reassured Californians, stating, "A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state, and align with Governor Newsom's vision of a California for all. The current draft model curriculum falls short and needs to be substantially redesigned." You also announced a comprehensive revision process and designated officials to begin working on a new draft model curriculum, which we understand will be available for public comment in the fall. We eagerly await those revisions.

We have learned, however, of an on-going deceptive campaign by former members of the original Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee (ESMCAC) to circumvent the legislatively-prescribed revision process and ensure that the first draft, which ESMCAC members helped develop, will be implemented in California schools with as little oversight as possible. Over the past few months, these individuals, who call themselves "Save CA Ethnic Studies," have attempted to take advantage of state and local education officials' focus on addressing the COVID-19 crisis to get school boards throughout the state to rubber-stamp, with little or no discussion, a resolution that "affirms support of the California Ethnic Studies Model Draft" and

“support[s] the work of the Save CA Ethnic Studies Coalition”. In addition, the more recent version of the resolution has school boards committing “to move forward a plan and timeline” to train high school teachers in the model curriculum, as well as to “adapt the curriculum for middle school and elementary school grades.”

School board members asked to vote on the resolution are not shown the original draft curriculum, and not informed about the enormous outpouring of criticism it engendered or that a CDE process is well underway for the curriculum’s redesign. Instead, board members are led to believe that in voting for the resolution they are showing support for AB 2016 and affirming the importance of ethnic studies classes in general, rather than endorsing the highly controversial draft curriculum that was condemned by dozens of state leaders and tens of thousands of Californians. As a result of this organized campaign, several school boards have already approved the disingenuous resolution, with more expected in the future.

The Save CA Ethnic Studies campaign has promulgated a plethora of misinformation and sown a great deal of confusion among school board members and school district residents. **We therefore urge you to issue an official statement pointing out the misguided and premature nature of these resolutions and urging district school board members to wait until the state’s revision process is completed before affirming support for the high school ethnic studies model curriculum or considering whether and how to implement it in their district.**

Thank you, now more than ever, for your leadership during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Academic Council for Israel  
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)  
Alums for Campus Fairness - National  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA  
AMCHA Initiative  
America Israel Cooperative Enterprise  
American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
American Institute for Jewish Research  
American Jewish International Relations Institute  
American Truth Project  
American Zionist Movement  
Americans Fighting Antisemitism  
Americans for Peace and Tolerance  
B'nai B'rith International  
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources  
Bobcats for Israel at Ohio University  
Boston Israel Action Committee  
Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law  
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)  
California Association of Scholars  
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore  
Center for Combating Antisemitism  
Chovevei Zion

Christians and Jews United for Israel  
Club Z  
Coalition for Jewish Values  
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement  
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)  
Conference of Jewish Affairs  
Davis Faculty for Israel  
Eagles Wings  
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)  
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors  
Hasbara Fellowships  
Herut North America  
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel  
Iranian American Jewish Federation  
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization  
Israel in NYC  
Israel Matters  
Israel on Campus Coalition  
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)  
Israeli-American Civic Action Network  
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute  
Israeli-American Council (IAC)  
JAM  
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA  
Legal Insurrection Foundation  
Magshimey Herut  
Middle East Forum  
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)  
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel  
National Jewish Advocacy Center  
NCSY  
NH4Israel  
North Carolina Coalition for Israel  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Rabbinical Alliance of America  
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel  
Ruach Fund (Real Estate Against Crimes of Hate)  
Russian Jewish Community Foundation  
San Diego Asian Americans for Equality  
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East  
Simon Wiesenthal Center  
StandWithUs  
StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department  
Stop Anti-Semitism Now  
Stop BDS on Campus  
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism  
Students Supporting Israel National  
Students Supporting Israel at Columbia

Students Supporting Israel at Drake University  
Students Supporting Israel at UCLA  
Students Supporting Israel of Santa Monica College  
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus  
The Israel Christian Nexus  
The Israel Group  
The Lawfare Project  
Tufts Friends of Israel  
WoMen Fight AntiSemitism  
World Jewish Congress North America  
Young Jewish Conservatives  
Zachor Legal Institute  
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond  
California Chief Deputy of Public Instruction Stephanie Gregson  
California State Board of Education Executive Director Karen Stapf Walters  
California Senator Connie M. Leyva, Chair Standing Committee on Education  
California Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, Chair, State Assembly Committee on Education  
California Senator Allen - member of the IQC, Chair of the Jewish Legislative Caucus  
California Assemblymember Shirley Weber - member of the IQC, Chair of the State Assembly Select  
Committee on Campus Climate  
California Governor Gavin Newsom  
California Governor's Chief of Staff Ann O'Leary