

From: Malcolm M. Feeley

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 12:28 PM

To: Ethnic Studies; Tony Thurmond

Cc: [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Remove Political Agenda from CA Ethnic Studies

Dear Members of the Instructional Quality Commission, State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and Governor Gavin Newsom,

I write to you with deep concern about the current draft of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) and to express my support for the detailed revision requests recently sent to you by the Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies.

I join in urging you to remove the political agenda from the "Guiding Values and Principles" and resulting lessons by adding the Los Angeles Unified School District's Elements of a Balanced Curriculum as guidelines against politicizing Ethnic Studies classes.

Also, I ask that Incorporate approaches to social change from a wide range of political orientations, including methods that work within the US system to improve it.

For the life of me, I cannot understand by the curriculum seizes upon a tiny portion of conflict in the Middle East, and directs attention on Israel, the Palestinian problem, and the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement. The Middle East and vast areas elsewhere in the world are rampant with racism and ethnic conflict, most of which are gratuitous and are barely covered in the American press. Consider the Uyghur's and Christians in China, the Kurds in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, indigenous peoples just about every where. These minorities are largely helpless, have little or no support in the larger world, and continue to be trampled. In contrast, the Israel-Palestine conflict is well recognized as a political conflict that is structured, and capable of being handled through standard international processes. As disturbing as it is, it is among the more contained conflicts in contrast to a plethora of other far worse ethnic conflicts around the world that are altogether unmentioned in the proposed California Ethnic Studies curriculum. Put another way, if one had to list the top fifty ethnic conflicts in the world today, I'm not sure that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be among them. Indeed, I'm not sure it is an ethnic conflict, as opposed to a variation of familiar political conflicts about where borders are to be drawn. (Indeed my more specific concern with including reference to the BDS movement is that many of its supporters and founders do not see the conflict as a border conflict--the oft-repeated refrain heard at BDS rallies--"from the River to the Sea" is a clear call to eliminate the state of Israel. If the Curriculum Committee wants to take this position, it should be explicit about it. Whatever the case, it is a travesty of educational pedagogy to teach students to speak in euphemism.

I am sympathetic with the Palestinian concern, but it seems oddly out of place in sweeping curriculum guide.

Thank you for your attention to these crucial problems in the ESMC.

Sincerely, Malcolm M. Feeley
Malcolm M. Feeley

Berkeley