

From: Jessica Goldkind

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:05 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Cc: Tony Thurmond

Subject: Please revise ESMC for fairer and more inclusive treatment

.Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

While I am excited to see an ethnic studies curriculum, I am upset and deeply worried by the proposed Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum because it does not represent all ethnic groups fairly and inclusively. It does not provide the necessary background information for students to engage in critical thinking and come to their own conclusions about complex, multifaceted and divisive issues. While the traditional curriculum is eurocentric, the ESMC also misses the mark on giving voice to historically oppressed minorities.

I have been a first grade teacher in Sunnyvale Elementary School District for 4 years and I am a proud American Jew. My grandparents and ancestors suffered religious persecution in Europe. My grandmother survived the Holocaust, although most of her family perished in the death camps. My grandparents came to the United States as refugees. Jews are an ethnic minority in the United States and a historically persecuted minority. I was disappointed not to see Jews referenced as an ethnic group and not to see antisemitism taught as a type of hate crime, even though the comparable phenomenon of Islamophobia is taught, among others. Antisemitic hate crimes constitute a large percentage of documented hate crimes still today in America. How can this curriculum not teach about it? Holocaust denial is still extant, and as the last survivors pass away and history moves forward, there is real risk of the world forgetting the lesson of the Holocaust. With antisemitism alive, well and violent, the next generation must be taught about it.

The question of the portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a divisive political issue. If educators want to empower students to be critical thinkers and challenge indoctrinated ideas, we must give them sufficient background information to understand complex historical, political and social issues from all sides. We must give them primary sources and a full picture of the claims and issues brought forth by all stakeholders in a conflict. Educators must convey the expectation that every student, educated person and politically engaged person has a duty to learn about multiple sides of an issue and listen to many voices. Otherwise we are only teaching young people to blindly follow the public opinions that are in vogue today. This applies to social and political issues in the United States, such as those regarding immigration and police brutality, as well as international issues like the Israeli Palestinian conflict. While the BDS movement was mentioned in this curriculum, I saw no information representing an Israeli perspective nor any historical background to inform the lens of young learners. This does not mean that the curriculum has to equally support all beliefs and policies; it means it should teach the historical practices of research, critique, contextualization, sourcing, and forming evidence-based opinions.

I urge you to solicit input from all the groups you claim to teach about in order to develop an accurate, complete and culturally sensitive curriculum.

If you do not take seriously this public outcry, you will be doing a significant disservice to the very mission you aim to serve through this educational initiative.

Yours in service,
Jessica Goldkind