

From: Michele Blum
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 4:54 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Ethnic studies

Dear Kenneth McDonald,

As part of the Public Input Template–2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum May 2019 Draft, I am sending you the following input:

It has appeared to me that the 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum openly promotes hateful boycotts against Israel and omits antisemitism as a form of bigotry.

- A glossary for the curriculum includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to, "establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions". It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence.
- The sample lesson plans for the curriculum:
 - Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives (p. 234).
 - Promote a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico (p. 234).
 - Use unclear language that implies "Israel-Palestine" as a whole is an Arab country (p. 237).
 - Frame the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives (p. 242).
 - Encourage teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders (p. 256, 264-269).
- The Introduction of the proposed curriculum states that, "The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to... enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism." Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Blum