

From: Travis Seifman
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 12:03 AM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC Concerns

Dear members of the Ethnic Studies committee,

My name is Travis Seifman. I recently completed a PhD in History at UC Santa Barbara. My research and teaching fields focus on indigenous and minority groups in Japan and across the Pacific. I am deeply supportive of the desire to expand coverage of Asian-American, Black, Native American, Pacific Islander, Arab-American, and Latino Studies in the California statewide curriculum.

However, I am concerned by rumors that after being pressured by organizations trying to restore BDS and antisemitism to the curriculum, the CDE has added a chapter that is not open to review. I certainly welcome curriculum segments on Arab-American history and issues, but not one guided by the hand of those with antisemitic or anti-Zionist agendas, and hidden from the public. The protocol of allowing the public to review the curriculum and comment on it allows constituents to hold the CDE to its commitment against discrimination, as promised when revising the first draft. I ask that the CDE stand by its previous pledge to keep antisemitism and BDS out of the curriculum, and to open the additional sample chapter up to fair and transparent review prior to the closing of the comment period on September 30th.

I wholeheartedly believe that it is possible to teach Middle Eastern and Arab-American Studies in ways which are not in conflict with the lessons we should be teaching the next generation about Jewish and Jewish-American history, culture, and identity. The two need not be pitted against one another.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Travis Seifman
PhD History, UCSB '19