

From: Ari Feinsmith
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 10:45 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Cc: [email redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ESMC Concerns and suggestions

Dear Instructional Quality Commission of the California Board of Education,

My name is Ari and I am a recent California high school graduate. I applaud some improvement in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), but I am worried by the imposition of the offensive, one-sided political ideology that still remains in this proposed draft of California's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

In the ESMC, I would like to see guidance for teachers to expose students to "multiple and often competing sources of information" and foster respect for diverse viewpoints. While in high school, I was given a very left wing education from some of my teachers. However, I only realised this when I later took the initiative to research the other side. I am sure many other students in my class did not do this, and therefore missed out on an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and develop their own opinions. I also think that our one-sided education caused us to miss out on a lot of really interesting discussions. Please encourage teachers in the ESMC to expose students to diverse viewpoints so they can get a better education.

Furthermore, please remove all explicitly antisemitic slurs from the ESMC and anti-Zionist references in footnotes, links, and bibliographies. Anti-Zionism is a potent and dangerous form of anti-semitism, and we should not be encouraging California students to promote anti-semitism. I remember when someone graffitied a swastika in my high school plaza, or when school campus was closed for a day because a student threatened to shoot up all the Jewish students. These moments were heart wrenching for me. It goes to show that Anti-semitism has very real and dangerous effects in the real world, and we must fight to stop it, not encourage it.

A flawed ethnic studies curriculum would negatively impact my younger sister's high school education, along with my future children's high school education. Furthermore, it would pave the way for a society that is not as tolerant to Jews, and that never ends well for anyone.

I urge you to make significant further revisions to the ESMC to address these concerns. Please revise the Guiding Values and Principles of the ESMC to use more precise and inclusive terminology, to align with the ESMC Guidelines, to build bridges of intergroup understanding, and to ensure critical thinking. Then adjust the lessons and sample topics accordingly to match the revised principles.

[[SEP]]Thank you,[[SEP]]
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